

Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin

March/April 1976

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Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin

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THE FIVE PHYSICIAN-SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

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Cover: For the sake of aesthetics and the enduring 8½" x 11" format, we have taken the liberty of rearranging the signatures of the Declaration of Independence. Our second special Bicentennial *Alumni Bulletin* comprises five essays on the five physicians who affixed their names to the Declaration, plus an introductory essay and an overview of other physicians who fought for American independence. The historical reenactment begins with a list of our distinguished authors on p. 9.

Credits: Cover, National Archives; p. 3, David Gunner; p. 4 (right), Christopher Morrow; p. 11, from *Joseph Warren: Physician, Politician, Patriot* by John Cary; p. 12, Yale University Art Gallery; p. 17, 21 (top), The Library Company of Philadelphia; p. 18, The Henry Francis duPont Winterthur Museum, Delaware, gift of Mrs. T. Charlton Henry (left); p. 18 (right), 22, Mutter Museum, College of Physicians of Philadelphia; p. 21, Independence National Historical Park Collection; p. 24-27, 29 (top, left), the Connecticut Historical Society; p. 29, Childs Gallery, Boston; p. 33, Parks Canada; p. 36, the Statehouse, Concord, New Hampshire, photographed by Bill Finney; p. 41, 42, 45, courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney M. Wilson, photographed by Bill Finney; p. 43, the New Hampshire Historical Society; p. 49, 50, 52, 53, Georgia Department of Archives and History; p. 51, 55, from *Historical Collections of Georgia* by George White; p. 54, courtesy of Howard R. Lamar; p. 63, Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

Editor's Note: In the January/February issue of the *Alumni Bulletin*, the actual source of the photographs depicting Zuni culture was not cited. These photographs appear in *People of the Middle Place: A Study of the Zuni Indians* by Dorothea C. Leighton and John Adair, published by the Human Relations Area Files Press.

A LAST REMINDER!
Your Alumni Council
Ballot Must Be
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TO SIGN IT!!

Overview

Hire a student!

As the costs of a Harvard Medical education continue to rise at a phenomenal rate, more and more students are turning to summer employment to help meet their expenses.

This year a large number of HMSers, especially first-year students, are looking for summer jobs. They will have one, two, or three months in which to work. These young men and women possess both outstanding abilities and the reliability to carry any job through to a successful conclusion.

If you will have a job available this summer that a medical student might fill, or if you know of anyone else who might have one, please call or write to the Harvard Medical School Student Employment Office as soon as possible. Your help will be greatly appreciated. Contact: Student Employment Office, Harvard Medical Alumni Office, 25 Shattuck Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02115, (617) 734-3300, ext. 461 (daytime), 2619 (evening).

Laurels for HMS

With the convolutions that medical schools across the country have been experiencing, it is reassuring to know that Harvard Medical School — even with controversies of its own — is on terra firma as the number one medical school in the country, according to a composite article in the February 9, 1976 issue of *Medical Economics*. Statistical reports from the Association of American Medical Colleges, the American Medical Association and the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare together with the results of a 1974 poll of professional schools published in *Change* magazine yielded the indisputable facts of Harvard's preeminence.

Harvard ranked as number one in the survey commissioned by *Change* magazine. Of the various other top 10 and top 11 surveys, Harvard logged in as follows:

- First in producing medical school deans (top 10, 1975).
- First in producing medical school faculty (top 10, 1975).
- Fifth (in respect to the number of recent graduates) and sixth (percentage wise) in producing board certified specialists (top 10, 1973).
- Seventh — with \$12,270,000 — in research grants from the National Institutes of Health (top 10, 1974).
- Harvard did not place in the state licensing exams (top 11, 1972).

The final determination of Harvard as being the best in the land was established by adding up all the first rankings for each medical school. After Harvard, the order for the top 10 is: University of Chicago, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, New York University, University of Pennsylvania, Cornell, Washington University, Albert Einstein, University of Michigan and the State University of New York at Brooklyn.

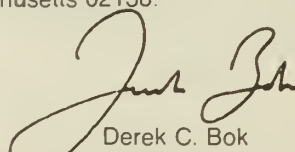
Gallico '73 wins Moseley Fellowship

The Moseley Travelling Fellowship for 1976-77 has been awarded to G. Gregory Gallico, III '73 by the Committee on Fellowships. Dr. Gallico plans to use the fellowship — which runs from July 1 to next June 30 — to continue his work in tumor immunology with Professor J. L. Gowans at the Medical Research Council Cellular Immunology Unit, Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, Oxford University. He has been doing research with Professor Gowans on the topic of "Antigenic specificity of rat allografts" since July, 1975 under a Surgical Scientist Fellowship.

Dr. Gallico's goal is a career "combining the patient therapy and the basic science of cancer." His medical interests have already taken him to the far corners of the globe: to Cali, Colombia in 1969 for study of the preventive and rural medicine and public health projects of the Universidad del Valle's preventive medicine department; to Zagreb, Yugoslavia in 1971 to analyze tuberculosis prevention and control on a fellowship from the American Associ-

To the Alumni and Alumnae of the Harvard Medical School:

One of the most important decisions I will have to make as President of Harvard University will be the selection of a new Dean for the Harvard Medical School. In the thirteen months remaining before Dean Ebert's retirement, I intend to conduct the widest possible search for candidates both inside and outside the University. Your thoughts and comments about the problems and opportunities facing the Medical School in the next five to ten years, your assessment of the qualifications needed by the individual who will guide this School and suggestions of specific candidates will be helpful to me. Letters should be sent to the Office of the President, Massachusetts Hall, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.



Derek C. Bok
President

ation of Medical Colleges; and in 1972, to the Uganda Cancer Institute in Kampala, to study chemotherapy and immunotherapy as adjuncts to surgery in the treatment of African malignant melanoma. After his year on the Moseley Fellowship, he plans to continue surgical training toward certification in general surgery and plastic surgery.

The Moseley Travelling Fellowships were made possible through a bequest to the University by Julia M. Moseley in 1912. Their purpose is to enable deserving HMS graduates to broaden their knowledge and experience by working in distinguished scientific centers in other parts of the world. It is interesting to review the variety of research interests that have taken our graduates abroad under the auspices of the fellowship in the past five years:

Henry P. Godfrey '65, 1970-71 and 1971-72, research in immunology and biochemistry: "Studies of macrophage-lymphocyte interaction," with Dr. J. H. Humphrey, department of immunology, National Institute for Medical Research, London, England

Joseph V. Hajek '65, 1971-72, research in orthopedic surgery and biomechanics: "Prosthetic joint replacement and internal fixation of bone," with John Charnley, Wrightington Hospital, near Wigan, England, and with Dr. Maurice Muller, Berne, Switzerland.

Dale Purves '64, 1971-72 and 1972-73, research in neurobiology, neurophysiology and neuroanatomy: "The mechanism of post-tetanic potentiation," with Dr. Ricardo Miledi, department of biophysics, University College, London

John E. Heuser '69, 1972-73, research in neurobiology and anatomy: "Functional morphology of the frog neuromuscular junction," with Dr. Ricardo Miledi and Sir Bernard Katz, department of biophysics, University College, London

William U. Shipley '66, 1973-74, research in radiation therapy, radiobiology and tumor cell kinetics: "Radiation-induced solid tumor 'stem' cell recruitment," with Dr. M. J. Peckham, department of radiation therapy, Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton, London

Mark Hallett '69, 1975-76, research in clinical neurophysiology and neurology: "Control of voluntary movement in

the human," with Professor C. D. Marsden, neurology department, Institute of Psychiatry, London

Charles A. Janeway, Jr. '69, 1975-76, research in basic immunology: "The nature and specificity of cellular receptors for antigen," with Professor Hans Wigzell, Wallenberg Laboratory, University of Uppsala, Sweden.

Miss Murphy finds missing links

Dorothy Murphy announces that, after scrupulous research, she has finally come up with the definitive figures on the total number of graduates in HMS history. Most of these venerable alumni are now beyond the reach of reunion invitations or alumni fund letters — it is solely out of a love of historical veracity that Miss Murphy has ferreted out their traces.

Since 1788, HMS has graduated a total of 13,578, of which 13,276 were men and (since 1949) 302 women. These new figures include two "lost" alumni uncovered in the search — confirming Miss Murphy's gnawing feeling that "somewhere there were errors" in the appendix to her *Mini-Quinquennial Directory of Harvard Medical School Graduates 1930-1972*. Both of these



Miss Murphy at work in her Countway hideaway

lost sheep must have confused record-keepers by long delays in completing their degrees: belonging to the classes of 1897 and 1901, they received their M.D.'s in 1911 and 1920, respectively.

Early graduating classes were tiny, often numbering only two, and did not exceed a single digit until 1813. There were three years, in fact — 1796, 1803 and 1808 — when no new physicians emerged from Harvard's portals. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the figure hovered somewhere between thirty and seventy, sporadically jumping higher. It has only been since 1921 that class size has consistently exceeded 100. The largest class so far was that of 1974, with 177 members. The progressive increase in class size accounts for the fact that, although the Medical School has been producing physicians for almost two centuries, the current active files of the alumni association encompass about 6,850 living graduates — more than half of all the alumni in HMS history.

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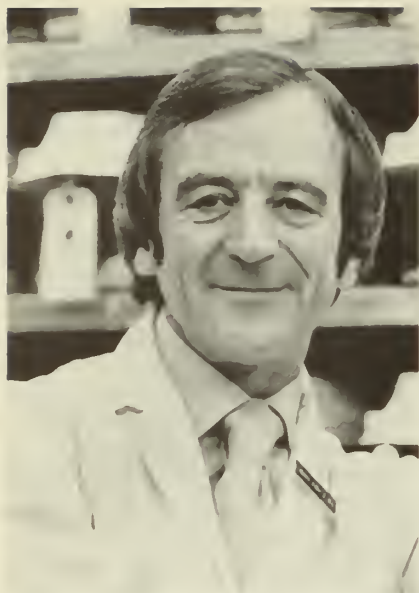
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Dr. Edward A. Boyse, recipient of the 1976 Isaac Adler Prize; chatting with Dean Ebert (left) and Dr. Baruj Benacerraf (right), the George Fabyan Professor of Comparative Pathology.

Boyse presents first Adler Lecture since 1947

"The best piece of original research produced in the United States or Canada on any subject within the medical or allied sciences" — this must describe the work of the scientist chosen to receive the Isaac Adler Prize. On February 11, Edward A. Boyse, M.D., M.B., B.S., of the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research was formally awarded the prize for 1975-76 and delivered the Adler Prize Lecture to an overflowing audience.

The prize committee, in its nomination, stated that Dr. Boyse was selected in recognition of "his pioneer studies on the surface of molecules of plasma membrane as the expression of genetic processes controlling processes of cellular differentiation." His lecture was entitled, "Some Contributions of Immunogenetics to the Study of Differentiation in Higher Organisms." In a synopsis of his talk, Dr. Boyse pointed out the relevance of his work to the struggle against cancer: "Today, a crucial problem in biomedical research is how genes govern the production and organization of vast numbers of cells that make up advanced organisms such as mammals. This problem is vitally important to man because cancer involves a breakdown in this differentiation process. . . . Because the chosen model for most of our research was the

lymphocyte, which is responsible for the body's immune defenses, our findings have prompted new approaches to the control of diseases like cancer, in which there are ineffective or unwanted immune responses."

Dr. Boyse, a British citizen, received his M.B., B.S. and M.D. degrees from the University of London Medical School. He has been in the US since 1960, when he came to the New York University School of Medicine as a research fellow in pathology. Since 1971 he has served in the capacity of adjunct professor of pathology. Dr. Boyse's affiliation with the Sloan-Kettering Institute began in 1962, as an associate scientist. He is now head of the field for cell surfaces there, and also professor of biology at the Sloan-Kettering Division, Cornell University Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

The Isaac Adler Prize, which includes an award of \$10,000 and the opportunity to lecture at both Harvard Medical School and the Rockefeller University, was established by Harvard in 1933 with a bequest from Mrs. Frida Adler. It is awarded no more frequently than every three years. Previous winners have been Wendell M. Stanley, M.D., Princeton, 1938; Carl F. Cori, M.D., Washington University, 1943; and George T. Avery, M.D., New York along with George W. Beadle, Pasadena, 1947. By the terms of the bequest, the selection committee is composed of the

dean of the faculty of medicine; the George Fabyan Professor of Comparative Pathology, currently Baruj Benacerraf, M.D.; and the president of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (now Rockefeller University), currently Frederick M. Seitz, M.D. The vacancy of the Fabyan Chair between 1947 and 1970 is the reason for the long time lapse since the prize was last awarded.

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HMS takes over vacated Angell Memorial

New space for clinical research in the medical area is being made available by the Medical School's acquisition of the former Angell Memorial Hospital, which had been owned and operated by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

After renovations have been made, space in the Longwood Avenue building will be allocated to several clinical research units for which no quarters have been previously available in the Quadrangle area, including: the Channing Laboratory (now at the Boston City Hospital); laboratories in cardiovascular physiology under the direction of Eugene Braunwald, M.D., the Hersey Professor for the Theory and Practice



The former Angell Memorial building, soon to house HMS research labs

of Physic; and the Animal Research Center. Costs for the purchase and remodeling of the facility are estimated at \$2,750,000. It is expected that renovations will be completed and all new oc-

cupants moved in by the spring of 1977. Meanwhile, the MSPCA has relocated cats, dogs and personnel to a recently renovated larger building in Jamaica Plain.

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A NICE PICTURE OF LOUIS AGASSIZ AND ONE OF THOSE JARS



Of course, the picture isn't quite authentic. He was far more interested in his fish than he was in the jars. Hand-blown flint glass was the only thing available in 1870; it was expensive and made-to-order, but it was the only clear glass available and Agassiz was accustomed to the best. For over a century, the jars, from 2" to over two feet tall, held his remarkable collections at the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

Last spring, we placed an advertisement here, and made the dire prediction that we'd be selling the jars to other dealers. As it was, we didn't. Since each one is unique, separately catalogued, and accompanied by a certificate from our curator, the logistics were just more than we could handle. The prices range from \$5.00 to over \$200.00; and the variety is incredible. The free 8-page catalog and historical booklet are practically necessary before even thinking about acquiring one of these elegant pieces of glassware; we just couldn't do it through other people. At this point, about half of the jars have been sold; museums, collectors, and a lot of physicians. We even gave one away; to Margaret Mead at the AAAS convention (Agassiz was the fourth president of that esteemed association). So here it is the famous BiCentennial, and every huckster in town has a replica of something to proffer. All we've got are originals, and they're old at that, and we're running out bit by bit. We're still maintaining that 10% discount for Harvard Graduates. This might be the year to pick up something real, old, historical and beautiful. The painting is ersatz, but the jars aren't. Write in now for the free materials; it's a fascinating story even if you don't want the very jar that held Thoreau's fish.

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The Contributors

John B. Blake received his Ph.D. in history at Harvard and has been affiliated with the Johns Hopkins University Institute of the History of Medicine, the Yale University School of Medicine, the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research and the Smithsonian Institute. He is now chief, History of Medicine Division, National Library of Medicine at Bethesda. He has been the Fielding Garrison lecturer at the American Association for the History of Medicine and holds an honorary M.D. from the Connecticut State Medical Society. The author of some thirty articles relating to the history and bibliography of medicine, he has also authored five books: *Benjamin Waterhouse and the Introduction of Vaccination: A Reappraisal* (1957); *Public Health in the Town of Boston 1630-1822* (1959); with Charles Roos, eds. *Medical Reference Works, 1679-1966*; *A Selected Bibliography* (1967); Ed. *Education in the History of Medicine* (1968); Ed. *Safeguarding the Public: Historical Aspects of Medicinal Drug Control* (1970).

L. H. Butterfield, the distinguished student of American history and letters, is a graduate of Harvard College and earned his master's degree there. He has taught at Harvard, Franklin and Marshall College and the College of William and Mary. From 1946 to 1951 he was associate editor of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* at Princeton University and from 1951 to 1954 he directed the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia. He is the editor of a two-volume edition of *Letters of Benjamin Rush* (1951) and the author of *John Witherspoon Comes to America* (1953) and numerous articles on American history and literature. Since 1934 he has been editor-in-chief of *The Adams Papers* at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Twenty volumes of this edition, based mainly on the incomparable Adams family archives extending over three centuries, have been issued by

the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. This edition when completed is expected to run to not less than one hundred volumes. His most recent book, which he edited with others, is *The Book of Abigail and John: Selected Letters of the Adams Family 1762-1784* (1975). Mr. Butterfield has been a Guggenheim Fellow, and is currently the editor in history for Harvard University Press, adjunct professor of history at Boston University and honorary consultant in American History to the Library of Congress.

Philip Cash received his Ph.D. in history at Boston College. He has also been affiliated with Rice University and with Emmanuel College where he is now a professor of history. He is particularly interested in seventeenth and eighteenth century Anglo-American medical and military history and American medical and social history. He has written articles and given papers on these topics. His major work is *Medical Men at the Siege of Boston, April 1775-April 1776: Problems of the Massachusetts and Continental Armies*.

J. Worth Estes, M.D. is an associate professor of pharmacology and an associate professor of socio-medical sciences (medical history) at Boston University School of Medicine. Developing an interest in medical history by his work on the history of digitalis therapy in the Colonies, he has published historical essays in the *Scientific American*, the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, the *Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin*, the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* and the *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*. Last year Dr. Estes was one of the Lowell lecturers in the 1975 series on medicine and the Bicentennial, Boston.

George E. Gifford, Jr., M.D. holds an M.A. from Harvard in the history of science. Associate professor of socio-medical sciences (head, section on the history of medicine) at Boston Univer-

sity School of Medicine, he is also clinical instructor in psychiatry and consultant to the historical collections, Countway Library, Harvard University and secretary, board of trustees, Boston Medical Library. Dr. Gifford has authored over fifty papers on the history of medicine and recently the book *Cecil County, Maryland 1608-1850, as Seen by Some Visitors* (1974). He is editor of *Psychoanalysis, Psychotherapy and the New England Medical Scene, 1894-1944* (in press) and a member of the Council of the American Association for the History of Medicine.

Frank C. Mevers was awarded a Ph.D. in American History in 1972 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. From 1972 to 1974 he was an associate editor of *The Papers of James Madison* at Charlottesville, Virginia and has also been affiliated with *The Papers of James Iredell* in North Carolina and *Letters of the Delegates to the Continental Congress* at the Library of Congress. Since 1974 he has served as editor of *The Papers of Josiah Bartlett* at the New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, New Hampshire. This project is also under the sponsorship of the New Hampshire American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

James Harvey Young received his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois and is now professor of history at Emory University. The author of many articles on American medical and social history, he is the recognized authority on the history of quackery in the United States. His books include *The Toadstool Millionaires, A Social History of Patent Medicines in America Before Federal Regulation* (1961), *Truth, Myth and Symbol* (ed. with Thomas J. J. Altizer and William A. Beardslee, 1962) and *The Medical Messiahs, A Social History of Health Quackery in the Twentieth Century* (1967). Mr. Young received the Edward Kemers Award of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, 1964. He was a Guggenheim Fellow and is currently chairman, Committee on the Beveridge Awards and the Dunning Prize of the American Historical Association, member of the Committee on the Parkman Prize for the Society of American Historians and consultant to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Physician-Signers

Five Out of Fifty-six

by George E. Gifford, Jr.

Five of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were physicians: Josiah Bartlett and Matthew Thornton of New Hampshire, Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut, Lyman Hall of Georgia and Benjamin Rush of Pennsylvania. There has been some confusion as to the number of physician-signers since two others were addressed as "Doctor" — Benjamin Franklin and John Witherspoon. When Franklin was fifty-three, the University of St. Andrews, Scotland conferred the honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, upon him, by virtue of which he was ever after known as Dr. Franklin. He lived in an age when educated men did not consider it strange or peculiar to think, discuss or write about medical matters.

Franklin was not a graduate of any medical school; he did not practice medicine as a physician nor receive payment for his medical advice; he did not call himself a physician. However, he was most interested in medical matters and theories. He was president of the Pennsylvania Hospital, having co-founded that institution with Dr. Thomas Bond. Dr. Franklin was a publicist for medicine, and of course is known for his experiments in the use of electricity for nervous disorders — Franklinism. To him is attributed the invention of bifocal lenses and the flexible catheter. Franklin was elected to membership in the medical societies of London, Paris and Edinburgh. Two French artists are responsible for mistakenly giving Franklin the title physician: P. Maren added the title, "docteur en médecine" to a por-

trait that he engraved and Ambroise Tardieu labeled Franklin, "physicien et philosophe" in one of his engravings. Whitfield Bell, Jr.'s recent article, "Benjamin Franklin and the Practice of Medicine," gives a good account of Franklin's interest in medicine and the earlier book, *The Medical Side of Benjamin Franklin*, by B. William Pepper, M.D. is the definitive work.

The other "Doctor" among the signers was John Witherspoon, the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence and president of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). Witherspoon had received the D.D. degree from the University of Aberdeen in 1769. In *Medical Men in the American Revolution, 1775-1783*, by Louis C. Duncan, Witherspoon is listed as a "medical man," leading to some confusion, which has continued to the present day, about the number of physicians who were signers of the Declaration of Independence.

From 1820, with John Sanderson's *Biography of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence*, up to the present *Signers of the Declaration* printed by the Government Printing Office, and *Threads of Greatness, A Bicentennial Tribute to Physician-Statesmen*, published by the American Medical Political Action Committee, there have been many brief accounts. It has been primarily medical amateur historians who have delved into the backgrounds of the physician-signers. In Harvey Cushing's biography by John F. Fulton

it is noted that at the January 25, 1935 meeting of the Nathan Smith Club, an undergraduate society for medical history, Herbert Thomas "gave an entertaining account of the five physicians who signed the Declaration of Independence." But as of now, only one in-depth study of these men has been made, that of Benjamin Rush who has had a recent masterful biography by David Freeman Hawke, *Benjamin Rush: Revolutionary Gadfly*.

George Richardson, editor of the *Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin*, asked me to be the guest editor for the 1975 issue celebrating the Boston Medical Library Centennial and the Bicentennial of the beginning of the American Revolution. I thought my pleasant duty had been fulfilled when that issue appeared. When I turned to his article I read, "We will look forward to his aid once again, in the second year of our celebration — in 1976." This second duty has given me a most happy chore. I thought this a fine occasion to dedicate a special issue to the five physician-signers of the Declaration, having a biographical account done by an eminent, erudite but readable scholar utilizing original source materials, and to have all the biographies capped by an overview of the role of the physician at the time of the American Revolution.

By turning to old friends for help, the pieces began to fall into place. James Harvey Young agreed to write the account of his fellow Georgian, Lyman

Hall. Philip Cash also agreed to write a sketch of the historically neglected Oliver Wolcott. J. Worth Estes was to tackle the rather shadowy figure of Matthew Thornton, whose epithet was, "an honest man." Lyman Butterfield, who once indicated to me that he still had an interest in Benjamin Rush, whose letters he had edited, graciously offered to contribute the essay on Rush. Choosing the author for the piece on Josiah Bartlett posed a problem, until I noted that Frank C. Mevers was doing scholarly research on this signer. When he consented to do Bartlett, all the figures were accounted for. To write the overview — a singularly demanding task — I sought John B. Blake. When he agreed to participate, the entire project had come to fruition.

Why were there five physicians among the signers? And what were their motives in going to Philadelphia in 1776? Whitfield J. Bell, Jr. has stressed the colonial physicians' need for social status and economic betterment as a reason for their becoming involved in the processes of government: "The poor remuneration of most physicians may have been a reason why so many eagerly accepted public offices and military commissions with their cash fees and regular salaries. Economics was not the only reason, however; prestige was another. The practice of medicine in colonial America did not rank with the law or ministry in the intellectual endowments it required or, therefore, in the social rank it conferred."

Why many physicians should have chosen the Revolutionary brand of political activity is, however, more fully explained by another historian, Brooke Hindle. As the scientists of their day and part of the rising middle class, physicians believed that a just society would be the outcome of the application of scientific precepts — a central theme of Enlightenment thought. This they affirmed by devoting their energies to the cause of the Revolution:

To some participants, the Revolution appeared the fruition of the age of Enlightenment and the harbinger of a better world to come. Ensuing events in Europe placed it as the herald of an "age of revolutions" which in due time would eliminate injustice, tyranny, and

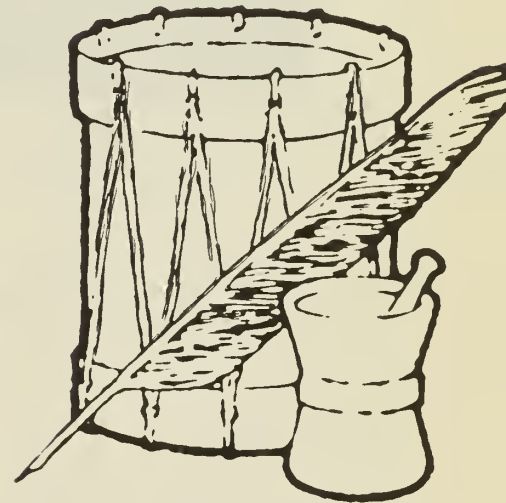
undeserved privilege from human society . . . In this sense, it was an expression of faith that the heavenly city which religious men had looked for in the other world might, instead, be erected upon this earth: . . . The first peak of cultural nationalism associated with the Revolution . . . coincided with the first successful establishment of a philosophical society in America, the founding of the first medical schools and permanent medical societies. . . . The Baconian assertion of the utility of science had still not been adequately demonstrated but the concept had been widely accepted in Europe and extensively disseminated in America where it was readily approved. The American environment strongly reinforced this European idea by providing significant support for scientific projects only when some clear utilitarian gain seemed likely. The war intensified this tendency and the separation from England further emphasized it by forcing the Americans to rely more upon their own resources.

Among the signers of the Declaration of Independence, the two "doctors" who were not physicians were promoters of science: Dr. Franklin's efforts are well known, and the Reverend Witherspoon, made president of the College of New Jersey in 1768, brought the Scottish Enlightenment to New Jersey by introducing science courses there. No record has survived of Hall's, or Thornton's, or Bartlett's "scientific" efforts other than medicine. Oliver Wolcott was elected first president of the Connecticut Society for Arts and Sciences in 1786. As a clear exponent of the Enlightenment, Benjamin Rush combined medicine and patriotism, science and liberty.

Perhaps Bartlett, Thornton, Wolcott, Rush and Hall were not typical colonial physicians, but they certainly left a legacy as to the future role of the physician. Again, a commentary from Bell is illuminating: "The Revolution, Benjamin Rush wrote soon after the close of the war, 'rescued physic from its former slavish rank in society.' Certainly many doctors had demonstrated what they could do as patriotic men of affairs. Some were revealed as the natural leaders of the community, freer than the clergy to accept most kinds of public

service. The popular esteem thus gained for the profession Rush was determined to preserve. He used to exhort his students thereafter to have 'a regard to all the interests of your country, informing the nation about the useful arts and seizing opportunities to diffuse useful knowledge and sound opinion of every kind. Doctors no less than others should speak out on public questions.' "

We honor Bartlett, Thornton, Rush, Wolcott and Hall not only as those who helped to change the course of our country's government, but as significant figures in the elevation of medicine as a profession in the United States.





Two of the physician-signers of the Declaration of Independence appear in John Trumbull's famous 1797 commemoration of the signing. They are Benjamin Rush (seated directly in front of the group of three men standing in front of the doorway to the left of the flags and drum) and Josiah Bartlett (third from left, seated). Since Trumbull lacked likenesses of all fifty-six signers, including Matthew Thornton, Oliver Wolcott and Lyman Hall, only forty-eight are seen.

Physicians of the Revolution

by John B. Blake

Five Americans trained as physicians signed the Declaration of Independence. While their names by that very fact are enshrined in the nation's roll of immortals, hundreds of other physicians, known and virtually unknown, served with equal patriotism and sacrifice, and with equal hazard to their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. Like these five signers they served in politics, on the battlefields and in makeshift hospitals.

One of the most active in the preliminary stages was Joseph Warren. Born in 1741, the son of a farmer, he entered Harvard at the age of fifteen and graduated in 1759. After serving an apprenticeship with Dr. James Lloyd of Boston, young Warren soon acquired a flourishing practice and before long was himself training new students, notably

his younger brother John. He was drawn into the radical cause as a close associate of Sam Adams in the 1760s, writing vigorously — libelously some might say — against the provincial governor. In 1772 he delivered an inflammatory oration in commemoration of the Boston "Massacre" and he was a key member of the revolutionary Committee of Correspondence and participant in the Boston Tea Party. Elected by the town to the Provincial Congress in 1774 and by this body to the Provincial Committee of Safety, Joseph Warren was "essentially the executive of the popular organization at the Province level." On April 18, 1775, he sent out Paul Revere to warn the countryside and the next day organized the militia to attack the British troops retreating from Concord. Warren led Massachusetts in organizing for war.

Killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775 — in which he served as a volunteer, although offered command — he became "the first great popular hero of the American people."

While Warren's reputation as the outstanding patriot-physician is secure, many other physicians in addition to the signers were active in political and military affairs during the Revolution. Perhaps the prize for the "most forgotten" should go to Samuel Prescott, a third generation physician of Concord, Massachusetts, and "a high Son of Liberty," who joined Paul Revere and William Dawes at Lexington on that fateful night. When intercepted by British officers on the road to Concord, Dawes fled and Revere was captured, but Prescott spurred his horse over a stone wall and completed the ride to raise the

alarm, enabling the Minute Men to assemble and save most of the stores at Concord.

Rather more prominent was John Brooks, a young physician of Reading, Massachusetts, who at the age of twenty-three led a company of Minute Men to the attack on April 19, 1775, and later at Bunker Hill. In 1776 he was commissioned a major in the Continental Army, in which he served actively and honorably throughout the war. Returning to the practice of medicine in 1783, Brooks was eminently successful in his profession and prominent in civic affairs and politics: he was seven times elected governor of Massachusetts, from 1816 through 1822, when he declined to stand again.

In his compendious account of *The Medical Men of the Revolution* prepared in 1876, Dr. Joseph M. Toner was able to list thirty-four physicians or one-time medical students in addition to Brooks and Warren who held military commands during the Revolution. Fifteen of them attained the rank of brigadier-general or higher (though some not until after 1783); at least three of these died in service: Warren at Bunker Hill; John Thomas, of smallpox during the northern campaign in the spring of 1776; and Hugh Mercer, of wounds received at the Battle of Princeton in January 1777. Two of the most famous, however, like signer Oliver Wolcott, only studied and never practiced medicine: Arthur St. Clair and the later notorious James Wilkinson.

Many of these military medical men also were active politically, before, during or after the war. On the political front they were joined by many more. In addition to the five signers, at least sixteen other members of the Continental Congress up until 1783 had been trained as physicians. Several of the Congressmen also served in the army, either in military commands or as surgeons. A number made a name for themselves in medicine as well as in politics: of the sixteen, the lives of ten are memorialized in the *Dictionary of American Medical Biography*, and James Tilton, Hugh Williamson and David Ramsay — as well as signer Rush — achieved more than local reputations. Numerous others were politically active on a local level both before and during the Revolution.

While such physicians were serving as soldiers or political leaders, the great majority of active patriot physicians served in the professional capacity as army surgeons. A few served in the minute navy or aboard privateers.

Especially well known for their medical roles in the Revolution were the two founders of the country's first medical school, now the University of Pennsylvania, John Morgan and William Shippen. Morgan had demonstrated his political interests at the time of the Stamp Act crisis in 1765, shortly after returning from his European studies and travels, by submitting a prize winning essay "on the reciprocal advantages arising from a perpetual union between Great Britain and her American colonies." Morgan based his argument chiefly on the mutual benefits of trade between colony and mother country, but he warned that Britain must not become oppressive to American liberties, "for the same noble spirit of freedom which actuates an Englishman . . . beats in every pulse and pants in every breast of the British subjects in America."

Ten years later Morgan became the second director general of the army medical department, following the discovery of Benjamin Church's traitorous correspondence with the enemy, during the siege of Boston. Unfortunately Morgan's valiant efforts to bring system and order into the army medical service were not entirely successful. The problems were too great, his power too limited and the first concerns of Washington and the Continental Congress lay elsewhere. Morgan was dismissed in January 1777. Though vindicated in time, his vengeful pursuit of his colleague and successor Shippen, whom he accused of intriguing for his place, forms an unsavory incident in the medical history of the Revolution. Shippen had been appointed chief physician for the flying camp in July 1776 and then director of hospitals west of the Hudson River before becoming director general of the military hospitals in April 1777; he served until January 1781. Of the other original members of the faculty, Adam Kuhn was appointed in 1776 as physician and director general of the hospital for the troops being raised in Pennsylvania for service in New Jersey, but his attachment to the patriot cause was not

unquestioned. The career of Rush is outlined elsewhere in this issue.

Shippen's successor as director general, appointed in January 1781, was John Cochran. Originally a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish ancestry, Cochran studied medicine under a Dr. Thompson of Lancaster. He served as a surgeon's mate in the French and Indian War, settled in Albany, married into the influential Schuyler family and later moved to New Jersey. When the war came, he volunteered his professional services to troops in that state. In April 1777 Congress appointed him physician and surgeon general of the army in the Middle Department; at the reorganization of the medical service in October 1780, he was promoted, with the backing of George Washington, to the new post of chief physician and surgeon of the army, until he succeeded Shippen. Never as well known as Morgan and Shippen, Cochran attained his reputation by his army service. Moving to New York after the war, he was favored with a government post in 1790 through the action of his loyal supporter Washington.

Another highly placed army physician favored with Washington's support was James Craik. Born in Scotland in 1730, he is said to have studied medicine at Edinburgh, though he did not graduate. Emigrating in 1750, he practiced in the West Indies and then in Virginia. As a surgeon in a Virginia regiment he gained military medical experience during the Braddock Expedition. When Washington became commander of the Virginia forces, he chose Craik as his chief medical officer and in 1770 they traveled together into the Ohio country to select land. In 1777 Craik became assistant director general; in 1780, one of three chief hospital physicians; and in 1781 chief physician and surgeon of the army, serving until December 1783. Some years later he became physician general of the army (1798-1800) and attended Washington in his final illness.

A larger cross section of medical leaders of the Revolution can be revealed through the careers of other physicians who received high appointments. In the Eastern Department (east of the Hudson River), the chief medical officers were Isaac Foster, Philip Turner and William Burnet. Foster, born in Charlestown in 1740, graduated from Harvard

in 1758 and studied medicine in Boston with Dr. James Lloyd and in London. In 1763 he settled in Charlestown to practice medicine. He became actively involved in the patriot cause, sat in the first Provincial Congress and was organizing hospitals in the Cambridge area soon after April 19. In effect, he was in charge of the medical department until Benjamin Church was officially appointed. He served in successively higher posts until his resignation for reasons of health in late 1780; he died a few months later.

Turner was born in Norwich, Connecticut, also in 1740. He had no collegiate or formal professional training but was apprenticed to Dr. Elisha Tracy (Yale, 1738), a better than average preceptor. During the French and Indian War he served as a surgeon's mate which gave him additional opportunities to learn from British army surgeons. He joined a Connecticut regiment as surgeon in the late spring or summer of 1775. In April 1777 he was appointed surgeon general of the hospital in the Eastern Department. After the war he continued to practice for many years as a leading surgeon in eastern Connecticut, all the while devoting considerable energy to efforts to recover back pay. Untrained academically, he apparently was not strong on scientific learning. "It is not all the researches & inquiries of Chymistry under the Heaven," he once wrote, "that would make a physician or surgeon."

Burnet, on the other hand, a native of New Jersey born in 1730, was a graduate of Princeton (1749). After studying with a Dr. Staats in New York, he lived and practiced successfully in Newark, except during the Revolution, until his death in 1791. From 1775, Burnet took an active part on the patriot side, and was twice chosen a delegate to the Continental Congress. In between he served professionally in the Continental Army.

In the Middle Department, leading appointments were held briefly by Benjamin Rush and by John Cochran (later director general), William Brown, Jonathan Potts and Charles McKnight. Brown, born (in 1748?) into a Maryland medical family, received an M.D. from Edinburgh in 1770, was a successful practitioner in Alexandria, Virginia and served with the army from 1775 to

1780. He is known especially as the compiler of the first American pharmacopoeia, published in Philadelphia in 1778 for the use of the military hospitals of the army of the Federated American States. Jonathan Potts, born in 1745, after schooling in Ephrata and Philadelphia, traveled briefly to Edinburgh and returned to Philadelphia where he took an M.B. in the first class to graduate from the new medical school. As a practitioner in Reading, Pennsylvania, he became involved in Whig politics in 1774, joined the Continental Army in mid-1776 and served in both the Northern and Middle departments. He retired in October 1780 and died a year later. McKnight, a graduate of Princeton in 1771, was still studying medicine under Shippen when the war broke out. He joined up and advanced rapidly. After it was over he became a leading surgeon and teacher in New York.

In the Southern Department, leading appointments were held by David Olyphant and Peter Fayssoux. The former was born in Scotland and studied medicine there before emigrating after the battle of Culloden to South Carolina, where he practiced medicine and participated actively in civic and social affairs. An active patriot as the Revolution approached, he served in the army from 1776 to 1783, participated in several battles and spent some time as a prisoner of the British. Fayssoux studied medicine with Alexander Garden in Charleston before taking an M.D. at Edinburgh in 1769. He was active politically and in Charleston social and civic life both before and after the Revolution, and was a leading practitioner as well. During the Revolution he attained the rank of Chief Physician and Surgeon of the Hospital, Southern Department.

In reviewing the careers of these dozen leaders in the army medical department — Morgan, Shippen, Cochran and Craik, medical directors of the entire army; and those with high appointments regionally, Foster, Turner and Burnet; Brown, Potts and McKnight; and Olyphant and Fayssoux — certain facts emerge about them as a group. Two were from New England, six from the middle colonies, two from the South (one of them born in Scotland but of a Maryland family) and two from Scotland. Five out of twelve had college de-

grees (one Harvard, one College of Philadelphia, three Princeton) and five had medical degrees (four Edinburgh, one Philadelphia); of these, two, Morgan and Shippen, held both. At least four had previous military medical experience during the French and Indian War. At least six were politically as well as professionally active before or during the Revolution. As authors of professional literature the group is undistinguished. In addition to the dissertations for the M.D. degree published by the five medical graduates, and Brown's brief pharmacopoeia, there were several pamphlets published by Morgan, the most important being his well known *A Discourse upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America*. Craik was the co-author of an account of Washington's final illness. Except for possible newspaper reports, this apparently is all.

Clearly, despite their few professional publications, these dozen men were well above the average American practitioner in educational and other qualifications. Toner variously estimated that some 350 or 400 physicians out of perhaps 3,500 practitioners in America held an M.D. degree. The accuracy of his estimates may be questioned, but the overall ratio of academically trained physicians to physicians as a whole was certainly much less than five out of twelve. Moreover, of those four out of the twelve military medical leaders who had neither collegiate nor professional academic training, all had previously served as army surgeons — Olyphant at Culloden, and the rest in the French and Indian War. On the whole it would appear that in selecting these men Congress chose well. These dozen, however, represent less than one per cent of all the medical men who took part in the Revolution.

A number of the others, less well known in 1775, achieved recognition during the war and later became leaders of the profession. Notable among them was Joseph Warren's younger brother John. Born in 1753, John graduated from Harvard with the class of 1771. After studying with his brother, whose politics he accepted no less than his medical teachings, John began practicing in Salem. He marched with the Minute Men on April 19, 1775. Although not at Bunker Hill when Joseph was killed, he joined up soon after and stayed with the

Continental Army as a hospital surgeon through the siege of Boston, where he distinguished himself, according to James Thacher, "for his humanity and attention to the sick and wounded soldiers, and for his amiable disposition."

Warren was also present at the Battle of Brooklyn and narrowly escaped capture at Trenton on Christmas night, 1776. Back in Boston the following spring, he was appointed senior surgeon of the Continental Army hospital. There in 1780 he gave the first of the courses of lectures on anatomy that were to lead to the founding of the Harvard Medical School in 1783. His later career as a leading physician and citizen of Boston needs no elaboration here. (Of the other original faculty, Benjamin Waterhouse sailed for London in March 1775, studied there and in Leyden for several years and returned to America in June 1782. Aaron Dexter, Harvard 1776, is said to have made several voyages as a ship's surgeon and been taken prisoner by the British.)

Serving at first under John Warren, James Thacher of Barnstable volunteered as an army surgeon in July 1775, after hearing of Bunker Hill. Thacher, born in 1754, had only a common school education and five years' apprenticeship with Dr. Abner Hersey. Barely started in practice at the time, he saw an opportunity for professional improvement and thus "motives of patriotism and private interest" joined to prompt him "to hazard my fortune in this noble conflict. . . ." Thacher has left a vivid account of the examination he and other candidates were subjected to. It is noteworthy that although he could practice as a civilian without any test of his qualifications, six out of sixteen examined at the same time failed to receive appointment. Serving from Maine to Virginia, from July 1775 until his retirement from the army on January 1, 1783, Thacher had ample opportunity to improve himself in his profession as he had hoped, and also to prove his patriotism by sticking with the army until the war was all but over. He returned then to Plymouth, became the town's leading practitioner, a preceptor of many students and a prolific author. Besides *A Military Journal During the American Revolutionary War* published in 1823 (with disappointingly little medical information), and other nonmedical works, he also wrote *The*

American New Dispensary (Boston, 1810), *Observations on Hydrophobia* (Plymouth, 1812), *American Modern Practice* (Boston, 1817) and the country's pioneer and still useful history of medicine, *American Medical Biography* (Boston, 1828). From Harvard he received a well merited honorary M.D. in 1810.

Another surgeon who attained distinction by his Revolutionary service was James Tilton, of Dover, Delaware. Born in 1745, Tilton was educated at Nottingham Academy and then studied medicine with a local physician before going to the new medical school at the College of Philadelphia, where he graduated with the first class in 1768. A practitioner in Delaware when the war broke out, in January 1776 Tilton joined a Delaware regiment as its surgeon and served with it until after the Battle of Princeton, when his regiment was virtually wiped out. In April 1777 he was appointed a hospital physician in the Continental medical department and subsequently was stationed at a number of different military hospitals. He devised a system of small log hospitals put into effect in Morristown, New Jersey to ameliorate conditions he found to be shocking. At the reorganization of the medical department in October 1780, he was chosen one of the fifteen hospital physicians and surgeons. In 1781 he submitted his ideas on hospital organization to the medical committee of Congress. After the war was over, Tilton returned to practice, and also served in the Continental Congress for one term (1783-85) and in other political posts. In 1813, with the country again at war with Britain, he reviewed his old recommendations and issued them with new material as his *Economical Observations on Military Hospitals and the Prevention and Cure of Diseases Incident to an Army*. A few months later he received the newly created post of physician and surgeon general of the army. While touring the northern posts he found appalling sanitary conditions and strove energetically to remedy the situation. In 1814 the war department issued the first regulations for the medical department clearly defining the duties of medical officers.

For the leaders and future leaders like Warren, Thacher and Tilton, biographical material is plentiful. For the mass of

regimental surgeons and mates, however, much less can be said. In his detailed review of the medical service during the siege of Boston, Philip Cash concluded that approximately 140 physicians served in that campaign. Of these he was able to find reasonable biographical data on forty-three including the two directors, Church and Morgan. The sample clearly is not representative: the choice obviously owes much to the indefatigable researches of Clifford K. Shipton into the lives of Harvard graduates. What the study does emphasize is the relative obscurity as individuals of most of the other hundred or so not in Cash's list. No doubt they were trained, like most American physicians of the Revolutionary era, by apprenticeship without benefit of collegiate or formal professional education. This is hardly surprising, for the same was true of British army surgeons. During the decade from 1765 to 1774, 103 medical officers were commissioned in the British army, according to William Johnston's *Roll*. None of them at the time of commissioning is listed as having an M.D. degree, although five obtained them later from Aberdeen and St. Andrews. Of 149 medical officers commissioned from 1775 through 1780, only five had the M.D. at the time of commissioning, all from Edinburgh. Seventeen more received degrees during or after the war — two from Edinburgh, one from Leyden, one from Rheims and the rest from the same two obliging Scottish universities. There were in addition uncounted numbers of hospital and surgeons' mates who were warrant officers only, none of whom, in all probability, had a degree at the time of appointment. (Incidentally only one medical officer is listed as having a B.A. degree: William Paine, Harvard, 1768.) From this it would appear, indeed, that the American hospital department was supplied with more M.D.'s than the British.

This suggests a final conclusion about American physicians and the Revolution. In England, the leaders of the profession did not serve in the army. In America clearly they did, along with — for shorter or longer terms — perhaps forty per cent of all practitioners in the country. In the achievement of American independence physicians of all ranks played a significant and honorable role.

Benjamin Rush

Benjamin Rush, the American Revolution and the American Millennium

by L. H. Butterfield

A fateful meeting occurred in the quiet village of Frankford, a few miles north of Philadelphia on the Delaware, on August 29, 1774. Two of the participants told a little of what happened, but almost nothing of the background and consequences, in records they wrote then and later.

One participant was Benjamin Rush, an enterprising young physician of Philadelphia and professor of chemistry in the new medical school there, the first in America. Rush wrote in his *Autobiography*:

I went as far as Frankford to meet the delegates from Massachusetts, and rode back into town in the same carriage with John Adams, and two of his colleagues. This gentleman's dress and manners were at the time plain, and his conversation cold and reserved. He asked me many questions relative to the state of public opinion upon politicks, and the characters of the most active citizens on both sides of the controversy.

John Adams, the other participant who also recorded the incident, had traveled with his colleagues — the Massachusetts delegates to what only later became known as the first Continental Congress — from Boston through Connecticut, New York and New Jersey in a sort of progress, which was climaxed by this reception committee that included not only leading Pennsylvanians of a

whiggish persuasion but delegates from other colonies who had arrived earlier. The whole troop continued on and ended the day at the City Tavern with a supper "as elegant as ever was laid upon a Table." But on the way there, "A Gentleman" who rode in Adams's coach "undertook to caution us against two Gentlemen particularly." With little doubt this "Gentleman" was Dr. Rush, and those he cautioned against were the Reverend Dr. William Smith (actually named by Adams), a loyalist who hoped to become a bishop, and Joseph Galloway (not named), a Pennsylvania delegate to the Congress, chief strategist of the loyalist forces in the Provincial Assembly and, as things turned out, in the first Continental Congress as well. Many years later Adams was to remember that the deputation from Philadelphia warned the Massachusetts men not to propose "any bold measures" or hint anything in favor of American independence.

In a strict sense, Adams's memory played him false here, since no one even in Massachusetts was talking about separation from England in 1774. But the divisions of feeling on this great issue were about to form, and probably the most important consequence of the meeting at Frankford was that it brought Benjamin Rush and John Adams together. During the next two years, after an uncertain start, they would work in ever closer concert, Adams in Congress to bring thirteen clocks to strike at the same time up and down the Conti-

nent, and Rush to overcome the rooted conservatism of his native Pennsylvania, where the idea of independence was bitterly resisted all the way until it became an accomplished fact. It has been said that the American Revolution was the result of a temporary alliance between the Adamses and the Lees, and the epigram has a good deal of truth in it. But without Pennsylvania — the geographical and therefore the political keystone of British North America — the Revolutionary movement would have fallen asunder. To be sure, Rush and Adams had many willing and influential associates. But their own individual efforts were essential, and it may not be too much to say that their collaboration was decisive.

Descended from a captain of horse in Cromwell's army who migrated to Pennsylvania in 1683, Rush was born in Byberry township (then a dozen miles northeast of Philadelphia, now within the city's limits) on January 4, 1746. His father, John, was a farmer and gunsmith, who died when Rush was young, leaving the care of his several children to their very capable mother, Susanna (Hall) Rush. Having inherited property in Philadelphia, Mrs. Rush set up a grocer's shop in town and sent Benjamin and his younger brother Jacob to West Nottingham Academy in Maryland, which was conducted by her brother-in-law, the Reverend Samuel Finley. An innovative teacher and, later, president of the Col-

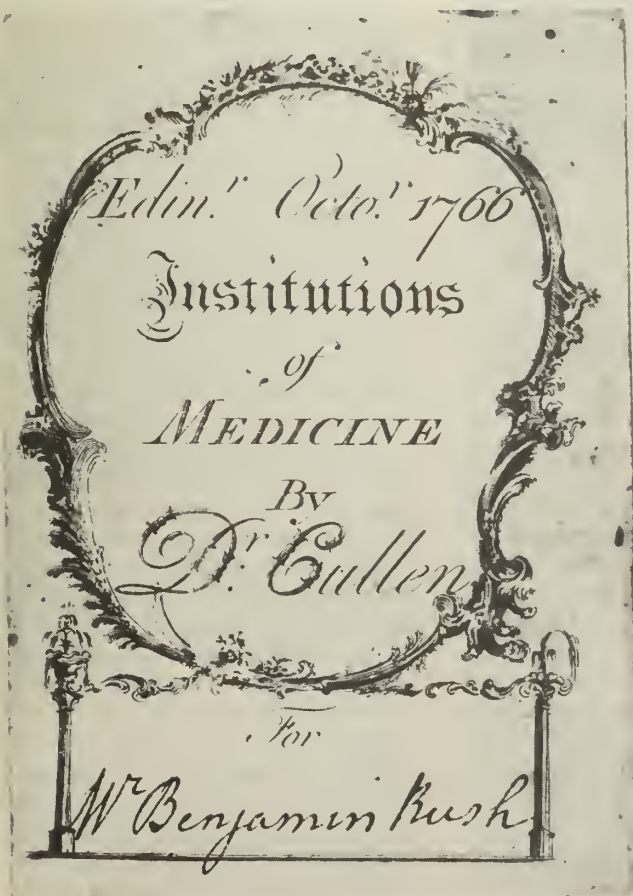
lege of New Jersey, Finley was one of the Presbyterian saints of the "new light" or evangelical school who inculcated in Rush a personal piety that never weakened despite his exposure to scientific and philosophical ideas of a very different sort. Inevitably, he was sent on to the College at Princeton, which was in the firm charge of "new light" leadership. Graduating in 1760, he thought seriously of divinity as a career, and it is obvious enough that if he had occupied a pulpit he would have become a major figure in American religious history. But he turned instead to "physic," apprenticing himself to Dr. John Redman of Philadelphia for a period of five years during which, according to his own testimony, he "never spent more than three evenings out of [Redman's] house" or shop. During those years, Drs. John Morgan and William Shippen, Jr., returned from their studies abroad and founded a medical department at the College of Philadelphia. Redman's apprentice attended the lectures there, but he was not one to settle for anything secondhand. He would go abroad himself and drink from the purest springs of scientific knowledge. So in the summer of 1766 he sailed for Liverpool.

The times being what they were, and Rush being what he was — young, eager, assimilative, easy in manner and not hesitant about putting himself forward — his three years in Europe were a time of enchantment and a vast widening of his mind. His two years in the Edinburgh of the philosopher Hume, the historian Robertson and his own teachers William Cullen and Joseph Black were marked by romantic as well as intellectual adventures. Having earned his M.D., he went on to London, where he walked the wards of the great hospitals and attended the lectures and dissections of the great physicians and anatomists. The philanthropic Dr. John Fothergill befriended him. So did his fellow Pennsylvanian Benjamin West, who introduced Rush to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who in turn invited him to a dinner where he observed Dr. Samuel Johnson sparring conversationally with Oliver Goldsmith and James Boswell. He dined too with the famous political agitator John Wilkes in the King's Bench prison where Wilkes was spending time after conviction on charges of seditious libel. He formed connections with radical writers and booksellers, who were all strongly sympathetic with the American

cause and with whom Rush was to correspond in later years. Best of all, Dr. Franklin, a good judge of youthful promise, was kind to his fellow countryman. Franklin volunteered funds that enabled Rush to extend his travels to Paris, and wrote letters of introduction for him to such luminaries as Barbeau Dubourg, Diderot and Mirabeau.

Rush returned a polished young professional, in touch with the leading ideas and many of the leading men of the international Enlightenment. He set up his own shop as a physician in the heart of Philadelphia and later was to remember that he "led a life of constant labor and self-denial," many nights hearing "the watchman cry 3 o'clock before I have put out my candle." He was to remember, too, that he gained much of his skill and early reputation by practicing without pay among the city's poor. All this was true, but it overlooked his own testimony in a letter to a friend in 1774 that his business soon "exceeded the expectations with which I left London."

Upon arriving home he had applied for the chair of chemistry in the College's medical department, and with the support of John Morgan (probably according to an understanding reached before Rush went abroad) he was promptly elected. In the following year he published a *Syllabus* of the course, a compilation quaint enough to modern eyes, but interesting as the first chemistry textbook published in America, destined, moreover, to run through several editions as Rush's reputation grew. He took to writing on other subjects as well; indeed his zest for printer's ink never slackened until his death. He had ready outlets for his tracts on medicine through the learned circles he had penetrated while in Europe and through the American Philosophical Society, of which he had been elected a member while abroad and an officer soon after his return. He early showed his penchant for reform and the influence of Quaker thought (so much admired by the French *philosophes*) in two powerful tracts against slavery and the slave trade. Completing this summary list of his literary efforts before the Revolution was a little volume entitled *Sermons to Gentlemen upon Temperance and Exercise* (1772), the London edition of which bore the still more engaging title of *Sermons to the Rich and Studious*. It



An engraved ticket of admission to Dr. Cullen's lectures in Edinburgh, which belonged to Benjamin Rush while a student there



Portrait of Benjamin Rush (1746-1813). Inscribed by Charles Willson Peale at the left center, CW Peale Pinx: 1783 (not visible in this reproduction). The sitter has just finished writing on the paper before him, "We come, now, gentlemen, to investigate the cause of earthquakes."

is of some note for its reflection of the homiletic strain in the author's temperament and for his early and marked interest in hygiene. In addition it contains an odd little description — perhaps the first in an American book — of the Scottish game of golf.

As to politics during the pre-Revolutionary period, Rush's views were strongly pro-American from the time of the Stamp Act troubles in 1765. Such meager evidence as exists suggests, however, that he was too engrossed in professional work, teaching and writing to have been active in political affairs. But from the day in August 1774, when he rode to Frankford to meet the delegates from Massachusetts, it was to be another story. Fascinated by the complex struggle

going on both in his own province and on the "continent" at large, he plunged into it with all his restless energy, love of action and articulateness. He followed the debates and decisions of the first and second Congress as closely as an outsider could, dining frequently with delegates at the City Tavern, visiting John and Samuel Adams in their lodgings at Mrs. Yard's and inviting them to his own house nearby so often that, as he later put it, they became "domesticated . . . in my family." At first, Rush's manner, or manners, seemed a little too effusive at least for John Adams, who tended to keep his guard up with bustling strangers. In September 1775, he recorded in his *Diary*: "Dr. Rush came in. He is an elegant, ingenious Body. Sprightly, pretty fellow. He is a Republican. He has been much in London. Ac-



The medicine chest of Philadelphia's Benjamin Rush contains all the tools he needed to compound remedies on the spot. There were scales and weights, a small mortar and pestle, a measuring beaker and a wood-handled spatula. In the top drawer he carried sixteen glass bottles containing such medicines as whiskey, brandy, paregoric, laudanum, calomel and jalap. In the bottom drawer were vials of tartar emetic, Dover's powder, extract of lead, friar's balsam, mercurial ointment and yellow basilicon. There was an oval box of Dr. Fothergill's pills (foregroinoid), roinoid and black, made up of calomel, squall and digitalis.

quainted with Sawbridge, McCaulay, Burgh, and others of the same Stamp. Dilly sends him Books and Pamphletts, and Sawbridge and McCaulay correspond with him." Adams was glad to find, though, that Rush "complains of D[ickinson]," because just at this time Adams was locked in a struggle with John Dickinson, leader of the forces for conciliation with England, over whether there was any point in pursuing such a policy any further. Rush's complaint was that Dickinson manipulated the Provincial Assembly unconscionably, and that he could do so because the Assembly had long since lost its representative character and was obstructing the true sentiments of the citizens of Pennsylvania. "All this is just," Adams agreed. But he continued to wonder about his informant: "Rush I think, is too much of a Talker to be a deep Thinker."

Adams was to alter this opinion drastically during the final struggle for American independence. On both the Provincial and Continental levels this climactic chapter may be said to have

begun with a pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*. The author was "a certain Thomas Paine," as Rush later and rather distastefully called him, and it was Rush who furnished him with both a title and a publisher. However mixed Rush's feelings toward Paine as a man may have been, he did not exaggerate when he said that the pamphlet "burst from the press . . . with an effect which has rarely been produced by types and paper in any age or country." For what Paine did was to speak the unspeakable in a perfectly matter-of-fact way and to make a total and definitive separation from England appear the obvious common sense course for Americans.

Despite reports of a conciliatory commission to be sent from London, British determination to settle matters by military means became ever clearer during the early weeks and months of 1776. Most ominous were persistent rumors that the ministry was negotiating for armies of mercenaries in the German States. By spring, heavy pressure was on Congress to move toward an inexorable end, but resistance — particularly among the Middle Colonies' delegations, still bound by instructions voted in 1775 — was hard to wear down. At last, on May 10, the leaders of the independence movement found themselves strong enough to frame and pass a motion:

That it be recommended to the respective assemblies and conventions of the United Colonies, where no government sufficient to the exigencies of their affairs have been hitherto established, to adopt such government as shall, in the opinion of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and America in general.

John Adams was later, and rightly, to pronounce this resolve, which called on the lagging colonies to revolutionize themselves, "an Epocha, a decisive Event." Yet standing by itself it was not all that unequivocal. Leaders on both sides of the question in Congress discerned a large loophole in it: what if those legislative bodies still dominated by conservatives and conciliationists decided that they were in fact "sufficient to the exigencies of their affairs" and did nothing further? Then the old in-

structions to their delegates against voting for separation would still stand, and the Congress would remain deadlocked. This was precisely the disposition of the majority of both the Pennsylvania delegation in Congress and its parent body, the Proprietary Assembly under the Charter of 1701. The leadership in both was virtually identical, and it centered on John Dickinson, who evidently planned to circumvent Congress's "decisive" measure in just this way. But John Adams was not to be so easily circumvented. With the aid of willing associates, he saw to it that when the resolve was ushered into the world it was accompanied by a preamble, written by Adams, hotly debated over several days and adopted on May 15, that left no room for inaction or even compromise. Anticipating some of the reasoning and language of the Declaration of Independence, especially in listing the wrongs endured by Americans at the hands of King and Parliament, it declared "that the exercise of every kind of authority under the said crown should be totally suppressed, and all the powers of government exerted, under the authority of the people of the colonies, for the preservation of internal peace, virtue, and good order [and] . . . against the hostile invasions and cruel depredations of their enemies."

This "machine for fabricating Independence," as an unhappy New York delegate called it, was aimed straight at the people of Pennsylvania. Among the artisans and small tradesmen of Philadelphia and in the increasingly populous back country especially, there had long been restlessness under the inertia and conservatism of the Assembly, in which both the city and the frontier counties were underrepresented. The Philadelphia radicals made their first significant moves in February 1776, by winning a large share of the seats on the city's Committee of Inspection and Observation, and mounting a campaign to revamp the Assembly. Rush was one of the new members of the committee — his first political office, although he had been serving since September 1775, as physician and surgeon to Pennsylvania's fleet of armed row-galleys in the Delaware. His principal associates were Timothy Matlack, a failed small merchant and scrivener, and Christopher Marshall, a retired pharmacist, whose *Diary* furnishes a record of almost perpetual

caucusing among the radical leaders during the following months, together with three men who were not officially members of the committee at all, but who were immensely active and articulate in its proceedings: Thomas Paine; James Cannon, a schoolmaster; and Thomas Young, a deistical physician and, like Paine, a roving revolutionary.

This Cassius-like band may seem strange company for the "elegant" Dr. Rush, to say nothing of his friend John Adams. The alliance was to prove very temporary, but it was absolutely essential to achieving their immediate purpose, which was to swing Pennsylvania's vote in Congress into the independence column.

A vigorous effort by the radicals to change the balance in the Assembly failed in an election of additional members held on May 1. But a British naval bombardment on the Delaware a week later gave Pennsylvanians their first taste of war on their own soil, and on the fifteenth, Congress published its resolve recommending the establishment of new governments, accompanied by John Adams's ringing preamble. The radicals pressed their advantage. In a session that began that very day and continued more or less steadily for several days and nights at Philosophical Hall, Rush and his associates on the steering committee called for a mass meeting of citizens "to take the sense of the people respecting the resolve of Congress of the Fifteenth instant." The scene in the State House yard on May 20, a wet Monday, was remarkable. A crowd of four or five thousand was present. John Adams, watching his first Philadelphia town meeting with the utmost satisfaction, wrote that all was "conducted with great order, Decency, and Propriety." A visiting South Carolinian reported, on the contrary, that "the people behaved in such a tyrannical manner" that he "felt it prudent to vote with the multitude." Unquestionably this was an exercise in raw democracy. The meeting called unanimously for compliance with Congress's resolution and declared that only the people, not the Assembly, were competent to take such action. It therefore agreed to issue a call for a Provincial Conference, which was actually to be a temporary governing body replacing royal and proprietary authority and planning for a constitutional convention.

Between the upper stone of Congress and the nether stone of an aroused citizenry, the Pennsylvania Assembly was being pressed to extinction. It staggered on for a time. In May Rush warned Richard Henry Lee of maneuvers the conservative faction was attempting in order to avoid its certain fate. In the early days of June the Assembly was at last obliged to rescind its old instructions, but its new ones were so equivocal that the delegation remained stoutly opposed to American independence. It was for this reason that, on June 8, in the early debate on Lee's "resolutions respecting Independency," James Wilson of Pennsylvania asked for a postponement "until the Deputies of the People . . . who were to meet should give their explicit Opinion upon this Point so important and interesting to themselves and to their Posterity." This reasonable request was granted, and it signaled that power had passed from the Assembly, which adjourned a few days later never to meet again.

On June 14, the day the Assembly expired, Dr. Rush was elected a Philadelphia deputy to the Provincial Conference, and on the eighteenth the Conference met in Carpenters' Hall. Elected directly by the people and chaired by Thomas McKean, it did its work briskly during a week long session. It approved the Congressional resolution, declared "the present Government of the Province . . . not competent to the exigencies of our affairs" and called for a Convention to meet in mid-July, form a new government and elect new delegates to Congress "on the authority of the People only." On the twenty-fourth, Rush, as chairman of a committee appointed the previous day, "brought in a draft of a Declaration on the subject of . . . Independence." It stated "our willingness to concur in a vote of the Congress declaring the United Colonies free and independent States." Following every development toward his cherished end, John Adams heard on the same day from one of the members — in all likelihood Rush — that "This Vote was not only unanimous, but . . . that all the Members declared seriatim that this was their Opinion, and the Opinion of the several Counties and Towns they represented."

The way was now clear for further action in Congress on Lee's crucial motion of June 7, tabled the next day to give time for the process that had been going on in Pennsylvania and several other colonies. In the great debate of July 1-2, traced in such scrupulous detail by historians, it is instructive to see that on the first day the majority of the Pennsylvania delegation still held its ground. Bowing to the popular will, James Wilson had now at length joined Franklin and Morton in the affirmative for independence; but Dickinson made the principal speech against it, and Humphreys, Morris and Willing supported him, to make a four to three negative vote. (Because of illness or disgust, the two other delegates had long absented themselves.) The vote by colonies was nine to two (Pennsylvania, South Carolina), with one tie (Delaware) and one abstention (New York).

But unanimity, as everyone knew, was imperative. Edward Rutledge of South Carolina, who on July 1 voted against the resolution, moved (after the nine to two vote) to postpone a final vote until the next day and on that day voted for it, altering his colony's vote from negative to affirmative; and a third delegate (Caesar Rodney) arrived posthaste from Delaware, turning that colony's tie into a favorable vote. This made eleven colonies for independence. As for Pennsylvania, the voluntary absence of John Dickinson and Robert Morris on July 2 swung its delegation's vote from four to three *against* to three to two *for* the great question. The New York delegates were still bound by their old instructions not to vote favorably, but they openly stated that they would therefore not vote at all before receiving different instructions, soon expected (and in fact received by mid-July). So that while the final tally was not unanimous, it was, as one New York delegate put it, "without one desenting vote."

John Adams later said in a famous passage that the true Revolution was "in the Minds and Hearts of the People." True enough. But hard and astute work — and even some nudging and pushing — on the part of radical strategists in Congress and in the city of Philadelphia had been needed to fulfill the people's aspirations as expressed for all time in the Declaration of Independence.

Although not a member of Congress when the vote of independence was taken on the second and the Declaration was adopted on the fourth, Dr. Rush had the inexpressible satisfaction of signing his friend Jefferson's document after it was engrossed on parchment and brought before the house on August 2. Meeting in mid-July, the Convention to draw up a new constitution had heavily revamped the Pennsylvania delegation in Congress. Those members who had opposed independence were swept away with the single exception of Robert Morris, who expressed his willingness to sign the Declaration and was to do so. Franklin, Morton and Wilson were retained. The new men were Benjamin Rush and four others who had been active in Pennsylvania's revolution within the larger Revolution. Rush took his seat and signed the Agreement of Secrecy on July 22, and the next day with characteristic euphoria wrote a friend:

The declaration of independence has produced a new era in this part of America. The militia of Pennsylvania appear to be actuated with a spirit more than Roman. Near 2000 citizens of Philadelphia have lately marched towards New-York in order to prevent an incursion being made by our enemies upon the state of New-Jersey. The cry of them all is for BATTLE. . . .

The tories are quiet — but very surly. Lord Howe's proclamation leaves them not a single filament of their cobweb doctrine of reconciliation. The spirit of liberty reigns triumphant in Pennsylvania. The proprietary gentry have retired to their country seats, and honest men have taken the seats they abused so much in the government of our state.

Rush went on to say that he himself had been "thrust into Congress" and was now finding "there is a great deal of difference between sporting a sentiment in a letter or over a glass of wine upon politics, and discharging properly the duty of a senator." But his first recorded speech, just a week later, did him great credit and was to be remembered. It was on the question whether, in the proposed Articles of Confederation, votes in Congress "should be in Propor-

tion to Numbers" or by states as hitherto. Rush took a strongly nationalist position, arguing that the old method would keep up factionalism and "colonial Distinctions." It would deny the principle of equal representation, which, he asserted, is the only guarantee of freedom. And it would inhibit the growth of the United States, because "We shall be loth to admit new Colonies into the Confederation." "We have been to[o] free with the Word Independence," he declared in a ringing conclusion. "We are dependent on each other — not totally independent States. . . . When I entered that door, I considered myself a Citizen of America."

Here Rush sounded the keynote of much of his later thought and work. Ahead of him lay a whole multisided and astonishingly productive career. The brief and early stage of it while he served as surgeon- and physician-general of the Middle Department of the Continental Army was to be clouded by quarrels with his colleagues and at length with General Washington, whose concern, drawn in many directions, was not all that it might have been for medical administration. Rush left military service with a fine and durable testament, however, in the form of his *Directions for Preserving the Health of Soldiers* (1778), a pioneering work in the field of military hygiene that was to be reprinted for practical use as late as the Civil War. And beyond that lay the thirty-five years of this tireless man's medical and psychiatric practice, teaching and writing, to say nothing of his activities as a public figure, controversialist, educational theorist and promoter, and humanitarian reformer.

These rich and variegated chapters of his life cannot be explored here. The spirit that animated them sprang from his training under the Calvinist doctors who were his first teachers, his professional studies and travels in Europe, and his early and unceasing curiosity and industry. That spirit was deepened and unshakably fixed by his experience in the Revolution. He was now dedicated to the practical fulfillment of the philosophical assertions in the Declaration of Independence. In his celebrated "Address to the People of the United States" in 1787, he observed: "There is nothing more common than to con-



It is not surprising that Benjamin Rush, a man of progressive beliefs, was intimately connected with both Pennsylvania Hospital (above) — the first voluntary hospital in the United States founded in 1751 — and the Continental Congress. On August 2, 1776, Dr. Rush added his name to the Declaration of Independence. The inkwell that he used (below) was made by the Philadelphia silversmith Philip Syng, whose grandson, Dr. Philip Syng Physic, became a leading surgeon in colonial America.



found the terms of American revolution with those of the late American war. The American war is over; but this is far from being the case with the American revolution. On the contrary, nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed." The vital work of bringing "the principles, morals, and manners of our citizens" into conformity with republican institutions remained to be done. Rush undertook to serve as generalissimo of this crusade. Through broadened educational programs on every level; through the abolition of slavery, strong drink, indigence and war; and through penal and other social and moral reforms, including humane treatment of the mentally ill, he would convert Americans into what he once baldly called "republican machines." "Dear Doctor," one of his favorite correspondents wrote after receiving another pamphlet proposing still another scheme for improvement, "I can compare you to nothing better than Mr. Great Heart in Bunyan who attacks without mercy all the Giants, Hydras, Hobgoblins &c. which stand in the way of his Pilgrims & conducts them thro' all opposition to the celestial City."

It was a good comparison. But Rush's millennial vision went even further. Believing as he did that for every ill and illness there was an appointed remedy, he thought it most likely that the remedies not yet found lurked somewhere in America — "Perhaps on the Monongahela, or the Potowmac," as he once suggested. And so he set out to overcome nature as well as human nature. Dr. Rush "could not help feeling," Oliver Wendell Holmes acutely remarked in 1860, "as if Nature had been a good deal shaken by the Declaration of Independence." Armed with his lancet, pills and purges, he confidently led the assault upon what he liked to call her temple, the human body, which he believed must inevitably yield, like the body politic, to benevolent and determined action.

Thus and only thus — or so it seemed to Dr. Rush — the United States would become a great, free, happy and moral commonwealth, in which men, women and children of all races would be brothers and sisters, war and pestilence would be known no more, and all the bright promises of the American Revolution would be well and truly fulfilled.

Bibliographical Note

The great body of Rush's manuscripts was bequeathed by his son James to the Library Company of Philadelphia. They include most of his correspondence, remarkably complete records of his medical practice and lectures and a mass of miscellaneous personal materials. A great part of Rush's library is also in the Library Company.

Nothing approaching a comprehensive and systematic bibliography of Rush's published writings has ever been compiled. It is a great desideratum. Robert B. Austin, *Early American Medical Imprints . . . 1668-1820*, (Washington, 1961), is excellent within its specified limits, but its sixty-six entries would be multiplied several times over if to them were added works outside the medical field, contributions to newspapers and periodicals, works published abroad, works published after 1820 and the like. Three works by Rush not in Austin are of special value for understanding his life and thought: his *Essays, Literary, Moral & Philosophical* (Philadelphia, 1798); his *Autobiography . . .* edited by George W. Corner (Princeton, 1948); and his *Letters*, edited by L. H. Butterfield (two vols., Princeton, 1951).

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The carved gold head of Dr. Rush's cane



Oliver Wolcott of Litchfield: A Temperate Revolutionary

by Philip Cash

Of the approximately thirty colonies that comprised the British Empire in the New World on the eve of the Revolution, Connecticut was in many ways the most attractive. Its much prized charter of 1662, which, with modifications, served as its constitution until 1818, gave the colony virtual autonomy within the empire, yet allowed her to enjoy all the benefits of belonging to the greatest imperium since Rome. It possessed the greatest ethnic and religious homogeneity of all the colonies, with the overwhelming majority of her citizens being English and members of the established Congregational churches. Her citizens were in general agreement that a strong government was a necessary and useful instrument to advance both the cause of religion and the common weal. This was reflected in their politics which were basically consensual, deferential, familial and stable.

In the century following 1689 the "land of steady habits" elected only eleven governors, thirteen deputy governors and ninety-seven men to its twelve-member council. Remarkably, Oliver Wolcott's sister, Ursula, was the daughter, sister, wife and mother of Connecticut governors, as well as cousin to four others. Yet the system was open to fresh talent and self-made men. Oliver Wolcott's father, Roger, was such a man, as were the colony's two leaders at the time of the Revolution, Roger Sherman and Jonathan Trumbull. As was to be expected, the social order reflected the political.

Church, state and social order were all buttressed by a sober and responsible judiciary and an excellent educational system, at the apex of which stood Yale College. As prosperous and dynamic a college as any in the colonies, Yale annually sent forth a steady stream of lawyers, magistrates and ministers to serve the colony and to maintain orthodoxy and stability. The small and medium-sized farmers of Connecticut enjoyed a thriving, if often inefficient, agriculture that yearly produced a substantial surplus of foodstuffs, livestock and tobacco to be sold in intercolonial and world markets. Indeed, during the Revolution, Connecticut became known as the "Provisions State." All in all, the learned divines, industrious farmers, resourceful merchants and dedicated magistrates of this "little Congregational republic" lived in a competitive yet basically fruitful and satisfying symbiotic relationship.

However, if Connecticut was attractive, it was by no means utopian. The upheaval of the Great Awakening during the 1730s and 1740s had permanently divided the established Congregational churches into the "New Light" supporters of evangelicism and its "Old Light" opponents. Inevitably, this cleavage was reflected in the political and social order. To further complicate matters, the much detested Anglican church was making slow but steady progress within the colony despite strong hostility and repression. It constituted not only a threat to religious orthodoxy and

homogeneity, but provided a Tory political base as well. A further threat to religious and social unity came from the Baptists and Separatists who were also growing, albeit slowly, and were uniting with the Anglicans in demanding and grudgingly receiving greater religious toleration. Also, by the 1770s, there were echos of Deism and anti-clericalism within this Calvinist stronghold. Two reminders of the defects in Connecticut's social order were the scattered presence of some 1,400 forlorn and dispossessed Indians as well as over 5,000 blacks, mostly slaves. Ironically, the latter provided several hundred combatants for the Connecticut forces during the Revolution. Another major source of strain was that Connecticut's burgeoning population, which had grown from about 30,000 in 1701 to nearly 198,000 in 1774, along with its commercial agriculture had not only brought prosperity, but had also brought strong pressure to bear upon the colony's limited land and resources. As a result, restless and aggressive nutmeggers, abetted by equally aggressive speculators, were pushing into the disputed lands of Vermont and the Susquehanna Valley, causing trouble with neighboring New York and Pennsylvania and increasing political tensions at home. Furthermore, the lack of an oceanic port meant that much of Connecticut's rich agricultural surplus was exported through Boston, New York and, to a lesser extent, Newport and Providence. This made her vulnerable to exploitation by the governments

and merchants of those colonies. To compound this difficulty, Connecticut's lucrative and direct trade with the West Indies was hampered after the Seven Years War by new and better enforced British trade regulations. All of these pressures modified, but did not destroy, Connecticut's standing order.

It was in this Connecticut that Oliver Wolcott lived, was nurtured and ably served. He was a direct descendant of Henry Wolcott, a bright, ambitious and prosperous Somersetshire squire who, some time after embracing the Puritan Way, prudently migrated with his family to Dorchester, Massachusetts in 1630. Seeking greater opportunity to exercise his considerable talents, he soon became one of the founders of Windsor in "up river" Connecticut. In 1639, when the General Court of that colony first met, he was one of Windsor's four delegates; he remained in political office on the colony level until his death in 1655, thus beginning one of Connecticut's most powerful political dynasties, one that lasted for the next two centuries.

Simon was the youngest son of Henry Wolcott. Roger, Oliver's father, was the youngest son of Simon. Being brought up in an era of frontier hardship and Indian wars, Roger encountered considerable deprivation, although he received much maternal love. He spent his early years in then remote East Windsor where there was neither church nor school. Having lost his father at nine, he was apprenticed to a clothier (weaver) at fifteen and at twenty started his own business. Nearly four years later Roger Wolcott married Sarah Drake in what proved to be a long and happy union, and settled on a farm in South Windsor. Being a man of open personality, physical strength, moral courage, sound intelligence, deep piety and unrelenting ambition and possessing good family connections, this model of the Connecticut way made rapid progress up the ladder of the colony's standing order. By 1741 he was deputy governor and chief justice of the superior court. Four years later the redoubtable Windsorite was commissioned as major-general and second-in-command of the New England forces that captured Louisbourg, the most glorious feat of colonial arms. Earlier, in 1711, he had served as



The 1766 Moses Park Map of Connecticut

commissary of the Connecticut stores for Admiral Hovenden Walker's disastrous expedition against Quebec. In 1751 this soldier-judge-statesman was elected governor; however it proved to be an unhappy climax to his career. In 1754, due to a general political and religious restlessness plus his failure to champion resolutely the dubious claims of some New Haven citizens in a lucrative salvage case, this veteran of nearly half a century of Connecticut politics was decisively defeated for reelection. He thus became the first governor in Connecticut's history to be turned out of office. Although deeply embittered, the old warrior tried to regain the gubernatorial chair the following year but failed by two hundred votes. While remaining on the council, he retired to his South Windsor farm and, much in the manner of a biblical patriarch, contemplated the follies of mankind while enjoying the many accomplishments of his numerous offspring until his death in 1767 at the age of eighty-nine.

Although he lacked any formal education, Roger Wolcott sought literary as well as political and military laurels. In 1725 he wrote an ornate and didactic volume of political and religious verse, the first work of this kind to be published in Connecticut. In 1760 the pious but

assertive layman wrote a vigorous defense of the traditional Congregationalism of the Cambridge Platform of 1648 against the Presbyterian innovations of the Saybrook Platform of 1708. In style and line of argumentation this pamphlet was similar to the earlier writings of John Wise, the noted pastor of the Second Church of Ipswich, Massachusetts. Lastly, in 1761 the former governor published "A Letter to the Freemen of Connecticut" in the *Connecticut Gazette*, decrying the rise of "Party Spirit" in the colony's politics.

Coming from one of Connecticut's oldest and most distinguished families and having a father who was a self-made man in the classic American mold, Oliver Wolcott was the beneficiary of the best of two heritages. Born in South Windsor on November 26, 1726, he too was the youngest son of a youngest son. However, he grew up in much more propitious times and circumstances.

After an apparently typical and happy boyhood in a Connecticut that was prosperous and growing, Oliver, at the age of seventeen, was sent off to Yale, an institution that, as Roland Bainton noted, "was conservative before she was born." Be that as it may, the Yale of

the 1740s was an exciting place. It marked the beginning of the tumultuous reign of the learned, innovative and ultra-orthodox Thomas Clap, one of old Eli's greatest and most controversial presidents. It was also the time when the college was rocked by the forces unleashed by the Great Awakening that resulted in expulsions, purges, and, in the year before Oliver's matriculation, a suspension of classes. Moreover, crowded conditions forced many students to board about the town and this further weakened the school's discipline. But all was not conflict and excitement. The quality of instruction was improved under Clap and a greater emphasis given to mathematics and science. The college had by now acquired a fine library (including forty-eight generally well chosen medical works), although it was available only to upper-classmen. In his introduction to his justly famous 1743 library catalogue, President Clap described the curriculum and gave the following advice to his charges:

I would advise you, my Pupils, to pursue a Regular Course of Academic Studies in Some Measure according to the Order of this Catalogue, And in the First year to Study principally the Tongues, Arithmetic and Algebra; the Second, Logic, Rhetoric and Geometry; and Third, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and the Fourth, Ethics and Divinity. . . . which is to obtain the Clearest Conception of Divine Things and to lead you to Saving Knowledge of God in his Son Jesus Christ.

Upon entering Yale in 1743, Oliver, as the son of the deputy governor, was listed at the head of his class, a position he retained throughout his college career. One of his classmates was Lyman Hall of Wallingford, Connecticut who also was to become a physician, governor (of Georgia) and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Some months before being graduated in 1747, Oliver, perhaps reflecting on his father's glory at Louisbourg two years previously, accepted a commission as a militia captain from George Clinton, the avaricious royal governor of New York. After receiving his degree he raised a company and marched to upper New York where he remained

until his regiment was disbanded after the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (October 18, 1748).

Returning to Connecticut, the young veteran decided to become a physician and, in keeping with the training of the day, apprenticed himself to his brother, Dr. Alexander Wolcott, who was fourteen years his senior. Alexander was by this time one of the colony's most distinguished physicians. Also a Yale graduate (1731), he had received his medical training as an apprentice to Dr. Norman Morrison of Hartford, a well known physician who, like so many leading colonial medical men, had emigrated from Scotland. He also accompanied Dr. Morrison and his father on the Louisbourg expedition as a surgeon's mate — military medicine being one of the best and most common ways of supplementing one's medical education during the colonial era. While engaged in an extensive practice in and about Windsor, Alexander benefited greatly from the assistance of a talented slave by the name of Primus who, upon being freed late in life, established a reputation of his own as a skilled physician. Noted since his college days for his proficiency in the classics and possessing the Wolcott drive for learning, Alexander acquired a handsome library of two hundred volumes which eventually became the property of Trinity College. He was true to the Wolcott tradition, serving Windsor as justice of the peace and representative to the lower house of the General Assembly. As an early and vigorous supporter of the patriot cause, the

tall, dark visaged physician became chairman of the Windsor committee of inspection and a member of the board that examined Connecticut candidates for medical commissions in the Army.

After an apprenticeship of two years, Oliver intended to, and may actually have begun practice in the village of Goshen, Connecticut. Medicine was by the middle of the eighteenth century making limited but definite progress. The number, training and caliber of doctors was slowly improving and there was a quickening of professional awareness. Nevertheless, due to a lack of organization, a limited ability to effect cures and unrestrained competition, the sons of Aesculapius in the nutmeg colony — as elsewhere in British North America — generally lagged behind lawyers, merchants and ministers in income and prestige. Therefore, it is not surprising that when Litchfield county was organized in 1751 and Oliver's father, now governor, secured for him the post of high sheriff, the fledgling physician abandoned medicine for the greener pastures of law and public office and moved to the village of Litchfield, seat of the new county.

This young man of affairs lived in Litchfield for about a year before building an attractive and commodious house on his father's property on South Street. The "Wolcott House" was for decades one of the town's best known and most impressive structures and is still standing, a gracious reminder of a rich heritage. In 1755 he married Laura (Lorraine) Collins, the daughter of Cap-



RES. OF OLIVER WOLCOTT.
SOUTH ST. LITCHFIELD, CONNT.

tain Daniel and Lois (Cornwall) Collins of Guilford and niece of the Reverend Daniel Collins, the controversial preacher-physician who had been Litchfield's first minister. She was a woman of considerable beauty, high intelligence and great strength of character. Through forty years, they would grow and sustain each other with abiding love and fond affection. They had five children: three boys, one of whom died in infancy, and two girls. The oldest son, Oliver, Jr., in addition to being a skilled financier, would add further to the Wolcott political laurels by rising to the post of Secretary of the Treasury under Washington and Adams and, following the footsteps of his father and grandfather, become governor of Connecticut. However, his term as governor would be much longer (1817-1825) and of greater importance (he presided over the Constitutional Convention of 1818) than theirs.

Although it was a county seat and located on the road from Boston to New York, the Litchfield of the 1750s was still a rough-hewn frontier town with no mail or passenger service, no newspaper and only the most rudimentary schooling. Contrary to the gospel of Frederick Jackson Turner, it had been from its inception highly conservative in both politics and religion. It was also a town of steadily growing importance as the northeastern section of Connecticut, the last frontier within its borders, developed and prospered. As such, it provided an excellent base for the legal, military and political ambitions of one of the younger sons of the colony's standing order.

Oliver Wolcott remained high sheriff until 1771. In the 1760s he served four terms in the lower house of the legislature. It was not until the early 1770s that the serene, incorruptible and tenacious former physician's political career came into full flower. He became judge of probate (1772-1781) and judge of the court of common pleas (1774-1778), was elected to the governor's council (1771-1786) and was promoted first to major (1771) and then colonel (1774) of the 17th militia regiment. Clearly, by 1774 Oliver Wolcott, Sr. was the most important political figure in Litchfield county and a member of Connecticut's ruling inner circle. In addition, all during this period he had been an active farmer and trader.

As was the case with the preponderant majority of Connecticut's political establishment in 1774, Wolcott was a staunch Whig. Indeed, with the death of former governor (1754-1766) Thomas Fitch in that year, any semblance of organized Tory political opposition collapsed. In August of 1774 Wolcott had presided over a special town meeting to consider the resolutions of the legislature attacking the British Port Bill and drafted its forceful preamble and resolves pledging support for Boston and opposition to the tyranny of taxation without representation. He also served as chairman of the Litchfield county committee of safety. Early, on July 3, Connecticut became the first colony to authorize the appointment of delegates to the first Continental Congress, although Rhode Island actually elected hers first. In November, the legislature, in a militant and prophetic mood, directed the militia to drill in earnest throughout the winter of 1774-1775 and in March, six militia regiments were assembled and equipped for active service. The legislature also ordered 3,000 stand or arms, 13,000 axes, picks and spades and 500 tents. Towns were also enjoined to double their supply of powder, balls and flint.

The militant apprehensions of Connecticut achieved reality with the clash of British regulars and Massachusetts militia at Lexington and Concord. Now the first phase of the war of the American Revolution had begun; a phase that would last until July 1776, when independence was declared. Wolcott, who was to be a tower of strength for the patriots in conservative northwestern Connecticut throughout the Revolution, immediately was appointed one of nine commissaries of supply. This group, headed by Governor Trumbull's son, Joseph, was experienced and able and did an outstanding job. Wolcott's role, however, was limited. On July 13, the Continental Congress appointed him one of five commissioners for Indian Affairs for the northern department who were assigned the delicate but vital task of keeping the powerful Iroquois neutral, a goal that largely was achieved during the early part of the Revolution. In pursuit of this objective, Wolcott, who was to become something of an expert on Indian affairs, spent most of the last half of 1775 in upper New York. The

calm but forceful and articulate Litchfielder also worked to ease tensions between his colony and New York and Pennsylvania over the aggressiveness of Connecticut settlers in the disputed lands of Vermont and the Wyoming region of the Susquehanna Valley and still retain the support of these settlers for the patriot cause.

Meanwhile, a general dissatisfaction arose in Connecticut with the performance of the state's representatives to the Continental Congress: the able but facile and temporizing Silas Deane and the controversial Eliphalet Dyer, leader of the Susquehanna speculators. As a result, in the election in the Connecticut legislature on October 12, 1775 these two were replaced by Samuel Huntington and Oliver Wolcott. Thus, the steady and reliable Huntington, the clear-minded and independent Wolcott and the durable and dedicated Roger Sherman would represent "the land of steady habits" during the crucial first six months of 1776. Furthermore, they, plus young Oliver Ellsworth, would constitute the backbone of the Connecticut delegation throughout the Revolution. Wolcott would serve as a delegate in every year until the Peace of Paris, save 1779. His total time in Congress would amount to over thirty-four months. During this time he brought his broad experience, solid intelligence and nationalist sympathies to bear upon the work of a number of committees, especially those dealing with commerce, Indian affairs, maritime affairs and the treasury. He also served on the Board of Treasury. Yet in none of these was he a dominant figure, for he lacked both the temperament and the political skills.

Wolcott arrived in Philadelphia on January 16, 1776. By this time the Continental Congress, now in its third year, had developed a personality and style of its own — a strange and contradictory blend of Yankee industry and impatience, southern aristocratic self-confidence and middle colony caution and circumspection. The Philadelphia body also was approaching the peak of its influence and effectiveness. Yet many members, and some of the colonies — notably New York and Pennsylvania — while willing to support resistance to what they perceived as the tyranny of a wicked ministry, found it difficult to accept that relations between the colonies and the mother

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My Dear

Philadelphia? 16. May 1778

I wrote to you the 17. April and the 14. and 11. instant which I hope you have recd. - I was very glad to be informed by Mr. Lyman that you enjoy pretty good health as he expresses it, and that the family are well.

By the Envelope you will perceive that a Revolution in Government is recommended: - to free our allegiance to and our under-stand-stand on Authority which had not only cast us out of it, Protection but for so long a Time has been carrying on the most cruel War against us, war tho, to not only afford but improve -

By the Blessing of God I am well, when I shall return is very uncertain - but yet I hope to make my family a Visit the latter End of July or the beginning of August - May the Protection of the Almighty be granted to you my Love to my Children and Friends Fare you, with the kindest Affection
O. Wolcott

In March Wolcott wrote to his sorely missed spouse: "You may easily believe from the Situation of Publick Affairs, that the Critical Moment is near, which will perhaps decide the Fate of the Country; and the business of Congress is very interesting." But both Congress and several of the colonies continued to balk at the inevitable. Psychological and political adjustments to new realities require time. However, a giant step toward independence was taken on May 15 when Congress adopted John Adams's explosive preamble to the resolves of May 10 calling for an end to all remaining royal jurisdiction. The next day Wolcott wrote to Lyman:

A Revolution in Government, you will perceive, is about to take Effect. May God grant a Happy Establishment of it, and security to the Rights of the People. If this Recommendation takes effect which undoubtedly it will, There will be an instance Real not implied or Ideal of a Government founded in Compact Express and Clear Made in its Principles by the People at large.

On June 7, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced his famous three resolves calling for independence, a plan of union and foreign alliance. On June 15 the Connecticut General Assembly instructed its delegates to support these resolves. On July 2 Congress voted for independence and on July 4 adopted the Declaration. This ushered in the second phase of the war; a phase that would last until the French alliance in February 1778. Ironically, Wolcott became too ill to remain in Congress to take part in the last two events. He left Philadelphia in late June, happy in the knowledge that independence was assured and that Connecticut had given the cause unswerving support. It was Wolcott's replacement, William Williams, the dour, hardworking Lebanon merchant and son-in-law of Governor Trumbull, who signed the parchment copy of the Declaration on August 2. However, under the general rule, Wolcott most justifiably was allowed to sign the document upon his return to Congress in October. He thus became the fourth son of Eli to do so. Older Harvard, though, had eight signers (including Williams) — the largest number and the best ratio of all the colonial colleges.

country had reached the point where any hopes of a mutually acceptable reconciliation were illusory.

Wolcott, however, had no such illusions. On February 3 he wrote to his friend Samuel Lyman: "To give up any of our rights I hope will never be done; and I imagine Great Britain will never settle with us upon the terms of enjoying them. What consequences these contrariant and fixed claims must produce, will easily be conceived." Although Wolcott was basically a Connecticut traditionalist, such an attitude placed him among the radicals in Congress. Considering his stance, it is not

surprising that fellow radical Benjamin Rush should hail him as "a worthy man of great modesty and sincerely attached to the interests of his country." Later, Joel Barlow, a Yale classmate (1778) of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., would exude in his floridly nationalistic epic poem, "The Vision of Columbus:"

Bold Wolcott urg'd the all
important cause,
With steady hand the solemn scene
he draws;
Undaunted firmness with
his wisdom join'd,
No Kings nor Worlds could warp
his steadfast mind.

One of the many letters that Oliver Wolcott wrote to his wife, Mary, about his activities at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

Wolcott arrived in New York on July 1. Here he acquired the broken pieces of the leaden equestrian statue of George III that had stood on the bowling green and took them with him to Litchfield where the ladies of the town, including his wife and daughter, turned them into much needed bullets. By August 15 the weary legislator had recuperated enough to accept an appointment by the Connecticut Council of Safety as acting brigadier general of the fourteen militia regiments being sent to reinforce Washington at New York. This was the beginning of Wolcott's other major role during the Revolution, that of militia general. He was one of 134 (thirty-seven per cent of the total) delegates to the Continental Congress between 1774 and 1789 to serve in either the Continental Army or the state militia during the War of Independence. Of these one was killed, twelve wounded and twenty-three captured.

Wolcott was in New York by the time of the disastrous Patriot defeat at Brooklyn Heights and the evacuation of Long Island (August 27-30, 1776). Following this calamitous setback, Washington's forces went through a period of deep depression and acute panic, with a large number of soldiers, including the bulk of the Connecticut militia, deserting. What remained of Wolcott's troops were now absorbed into new brigades. Thus ended ingloriously his first campaign experience of the Revolution.

The Connecticut government nevertheless retained its faith in Wolcott, and in December he was elected permanent brigadier of the 6th Brigade (northwestern Connecticut) of the state's militia. Throughout the remainder of the Revolution he spent the summers in military and commissary activities. In September of 1777, without orders but with good instinct, he heeded the urgent plea of General Gates for reinforcements in upper New York and led a force of a little over three hundred volunteers to his support. They arrived about a week before the decisive Battle of Bemis Heights (October 7), which resulted in Burgoyne's surrender. However, true to the militia tradition, his volunteers refused to remain on duty at Albany after the immediate danger had passed. In May of 1779 Wolcott was promoted to major general of the militia and that summer was faced with the impossible task of protecting the Con-

necticut coast, with inadequate numbers of raw militiamen, from the devastating raids of Tryon's combined naval and military forces. Nonetheless, he struggled continuously and valiantly to do what he could.

The greater part of Wolcott's energies during most of the Revolution were absorbed by the Continental Congress. Throughout the dark winter of 1776-1777, when Congress was forced out of Philadelphia to Baltimore, a town Wolcott found "too dirty and too dear," he served as Connecticut's only representative in what was a rump session of around twenty-five members. Just before leaving Philadelphia in mid-December, with the city in turmoil and Washington doggedly trying to rally his shattered army, this patriot for all seasons wrote to his equally resolute wife:

Whatever Events may take place the American Cause will be supported to the last, and I trust God that it will succeed. The Grecian, Roman, and Dutch States were in their Infancy reduced to the greatest Distress, infinitely beyond what we have experienced. The God who governs the Universe, and who holds Empires in his Hand, can with the least Effort of his Will grant us all that Security, Opulence, and Power, which they have enjoyed. The present Scene, it is true, appears somewhat gloomy, but the natural or more obvious Cause seems to be owing to the Terms of Enlistment of the Army having expired, I hope we may have a most respectable one before long established. The Business of War is the Result of Experience.

From the middle of February until early July 1778 he attended Congress at York, Pennsylvania, a town he found "much more pleasant than Baltimore," although very expensive. During this time, true to his nationalist sympathies, he was one of the staunchest supporters of a bill that would have granted lifetime half-pay pensions to officers of the Continental Army and was one of only two members to refuse to vote for a seven year half-pay compromise. In keeping with his strong sense of independence, he was one of only four delegates to vote against the death penalty for persons who were convicted of

aiding the enemy near army headquarters. Just before leaving in July, he affixed his signature to the Articles of Confederation.

Wolcott did not return to Congress until late November of 1780. Between then and April 1783 he would serve fourteen months more in that body. During this period his enthusiasm for nationalizing measures became even more pronounced. He vigorously championed the bill that would have established a national impost, giving Congress a badly needed independent income and helping to finance the country's staggering debt, and was deeply disgusted when it failed ratification by one state. He also strongly supported the incorporation of Robert Morris's Bank of North America. Finally, he threw his full weight behind a measure that would have commuted the lifetime half-pay pensions (voted since he was last in Congress) of the sorely disgruntled Continental Army officers into a payment equaling five years' full salary, even though such a stand was highly unpopular in Connecticut and cost him his seat in Congress. On April 11, 1783 he left that body for the last time. It was not an unwilling departure, for he was wholly out of sympathy with the wave of localism that had enveloped both Connecticut and the new nation.

Although Congress and the militia were Wolcott's chief concern during the Revolution, he also continued to serve Litchfield as moderator and selectman whenever possible. Also, in 1780 he became a member of the state Council of Safety and in January 1782 the legislature once more demonstrated their faith in this selfless patriot's probity by appointing him chairman of the committee which investigated, at his request, the groundless yet insidious rumors that Governor Trumbull had been secretly trading with the enemy.

Oliver Wolcott's services to Connecticut and the nation during the War of Independence were many, varied and important; from his day until our own he has justly been praised for them. Yet he could not have performed them, or at least not without far more desperate sacrifice, had not his wife made less public but highly important contributions of her own. Like her husband, this handsome woman possessed solid intelligence, great energy, sturdy charac-



Portrait of Oliver Wolcott (1726-1797) by Ralph Earl. This is the pendant portrait to the one of his wife, which was painted around 1789 as was the portrait of their daughter, Mariann. Mother and daughter contributed to the war effort in a most unusual fashion — they helped to melt down the statue of George III, which had been torn down by an angry mob on Bowling Green in New York City. Out of the lead statue that was dragged in pieces to Litchfield, Mrs. Wolcott made 4,250 bullets while her daughter, aged eleven, made 10,790.

ter and great spiritual strength. Amidst all the confusion, exigencies and suffering of our second longest war, and with her husband absent for months at a time and preoccupied with public affairs even when he was home, she educated the children, secured their successful inoculation, managed the farm and kept the accounts; all the while providing the love and encouragement needed to sustain her sorely pressed spouse through the times that tried men's souls. While justly revering the men who brought these United States into being, it might be wise to gratefully and soberly reflect upon the hidden contributions of the Laura Wolcotts.

Oliver Wolcott's public career was far from over when the Revolution ended. In 1784-1785 he served as one of the three commissioners for Indian affairs in the northern department who negotiated the ephemeral Treaty of Fort Stanwix (January 20, 1785) with the uneasy Iroquois. Shortly after this he resigned. Again in 1789 he helped Connecticut conclude a treaty with the Wyandottes that ended their claims to the Western Reserve. In 1786, in keeping with Connecticut's political tradition of deference and seniority, this veteran of over three decades of public service was elected lieutenant governor by the

legislature even though he had only a plurality of the popular vote. In January 1788 Connecticut held a five day convention that overwhelmingly approved the new constitution, thus becoming the fifth state and the first in New England to do so. Appropriately enough, Wolcott gave one of the three concluding speeches in support of the new frame of government.

Two other events in Wolcott's life during the 1780s are worth noting. One occurred in June 1785 when he was elected a member of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture. The other took place in November 1786 when he emancipated his slave Caesar. That this decent and honorable man, who had struggled so long to preserve his own freedom and who lived in a state with few blacks, delayed so long before freeing his one slave is a grim reminder that the United States was born with a tragic defect: moral myopia when it came to racial justice.

Racial justice was not a major concern of Wolcott or most Americans of that era, and he found much to approve of in the United States of the early 1790s. Connecticut was prospering and tranquil, the new constitution was safely launched, Washington was president and Oliver, Jr., his pride and joy, was



the new comptroller of the national treasury. Reflecting on all this, the old signer wrote to his son on July 4, 1791, the fifteenth anniversary of the Declaration:

I suppose that this morning you are putting on your best coat, decently to celebrate the anniversary of American Independence — an event which seems to become more and more important, and which fully justifies the struggle which we made to obtain it. The country has already much more than recovered all the damage, or real inconvenience from the war. What a misfortune must it have been to us, to have been connected with a power which is continually either making or sending an enemy in every part of the globe.

The following year his reason for contentment grew as Yale awarded him an honorary LL.D.

Within the next few years the French Revolution abroad and the rise of "factions" (political parties) at home, plus the increasingly vitriolic attacks upon his beloved son, combined to replace the old statesman's earlier satisfaction with an increasing pessimism. In November 1795 he wrote to Oliver, Jr.:

But I fear we have but little reason to flatter ourselves with a durable tranquility. We have fondly believed that mankind were wiser and better than they were in former ages, but, of this, I believe we have no evidence. We are making experiments, but they will probably terminate as others have done.

His frustrations were increased when, as a presidential elector in 1796 (he had been one in 1788 and 1792 as well), he joined in a scheme among the Connecticut electors: to assure the election of John Adams as president. They all did not cast their second votes for Thomas Pinckney (electors did not then vote for the offices of president and vice-president separately; the candidate who received the greatest number of votes was president, the one who received the second greatest was vice-president), thus inadvertently aiding the detested Thomas Jefferson to edge out Pinckney as vice-president.

All was not gloom and frustration. Adams was president, Oliver, Jr. continued as Secretary of the Treasury, a post he had held since the last two years of Washington's administration, and in the previous January Oliver Sr. himself had become governor upon the death of Samuel Huntington. He was elected in his own right in the fall, but the Litchfielder's term in the gubernatorial chair would be brief. On December 1, 1797, he died at the age of seventy-two. He was buried in East Cemetery in Litchfield.

In that constellation of political genius that constituted the founding fathers, Oliver Wolcott was a star of small magnitude. He sustained rather than created and supported rather than led. Yet he also was a man of rugged common sense and exceptional integrity who labored unceasingly for what he believed to be a priceless set of institutions and ideals during a time of unique importance to the world. This gives an extra dimension to his life — a life that in many ways represents the best of two important elements of our heritage: Puritanism and Federalism. In his belief in a moral and purposeful universe, the strength and beauty of order, the doctrine of stewardship, the primacy of conscience and distrust of hereditary authority he was a true son of New England Puritanism. Yet he had little of its censoriousness or obsession with guilt. In his abiding faith in the efficacy of strong government and its management by an aristocracy of character and intellect responsible to an alert electorate he represented the best of New England Federalism.

Despite a growing pessimism, he never became one of those ultras who regretted the Revolution. Not that this independent-minded nutmeger had no faults. He never had much feeling or understanding of human nature and he had little comprehension that government must make allowance for it. His travels and broad experience notwithstanding, there was more than a little of the provincial Yankee in him. He could be tolerant, but not understanding. Yet, when all is said and done, there remains the fact that he spent his entire life laboring to make his beliefs and institutions work and when the time came he pledged his life, his fortune and his honor in their defense. Not much better could be said of any man.

Bibliographical Note

Oliver Wolcott, Sr. was a member of the fourth generation of one of Connecticut's most distinguished and versatile families. He came from an old and populous colony and was active politically on the local, colonial, state and national levels. In addition, he had a brief medical and a more prolonged military career. Because of this, my attempt to understand him led to a fairly broad range of investigation. Happily, in doing this work I was fortunate enough to be able to make use of four libraries that possessed both rich resources and pleasantly efficient staffs (not to mind their architectural beauty): the Boston College Library, the Boston Public Library, the library of the Connecticut Historical Society and the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine.

Any investigation of Wolcott must obviously make use of the library of the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford. Here are the bulk of his papers as well as those of his son. There is also a fine collection of early Connecticut newspapers, including the *Connecticut Courant*, to the best of my knowledge the only fully indexed newspaper of the colonial-Revolutionary era. In addition, it contained the town histories of Litchfield and Windsor as well as the Wolcott genealogies. The Countway Library was used as the source of works dealing with early American and Connecticut medicine. The Boston College and especially the Boston Public Library were the source of the remaining works consulted, including the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, which list Wolcott's committees and votes and the *Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress*, which contain not only many of Wolcott's most valuable letters, but also the dates of his attendance at the Congress.

Matthew Thornton

Honest Dr. Thornton: The Path to Rebellion

by J. Worth Estes

If Dr. Matthew Thornton of eighteenth century New Hampshire were to return to his adopted state today, he would readily recognize its towns and landscapes, save for the few technological scars inflicted in the twentieth century. Jeremy Belknap described the state when it was new during Thornton's lifetime:

Notwithstanding the gloomy appearance of an American forest, yet a contemplative mind may find in it many subjects of entertainment. The most obvious remark, is the silence which reigns through it. In a calm day, no sound is heard but that of running water, or perhaps the chirping of a squirrel, or the squalling of a jay. . . . Another thing, worthy of observation, is the aged and majestic appearance of the trees, of which the most noble is the mast pine. . . . Among these wild and rugged scenes, it is amusing to observe the luxuriant sportings of nature. Trees are seen growing on a naked rock; their roots either penetrate some of its crevices, or run over its surface, and shoot into the ground . . .

It was the towering mast pine of New Hampshire that acted as a major catalyst for the state's disillusionment with royal government and moved the citizens of New Hampshire toward republicanism. The royal governors, and their friends and relations, who made

their fortunes selling masts to the royal navy, ran an efficient colonial government, but it was an Anglican oligarchy based on nepotism. The agrarian Congregationalist, Baptist and Presbyterian towns situated inland from seacoast Portsmouth had other traditions and concerns; their people, drawing on a different body of experience, viewed democracy as the preferable form of government.

Matthew Thornton had been bred to revolution, by the time it happened. But he was not an instigator of revolution. He came to sign the Declaration of Independence largely by chance. If he had not signed it, his name would be found only as one of many among the minutes of New Hampshire town meetings and provincial congresses, and the epitaph on his gravestone facing onto U.S. Route 3 at Thornton's Ferry, a few miles north of Nashua, would read the same: "The Honest Man." The use of "the" rather than "an" implies that the epitaph's author saw Thornton as a *singularly* honest man. Perhaps it is because his honesty was so complete that few traces of his life and work, and virtually none of his professional accomplishments, can be found.

Matthew Thornton was born, probably in 1714, to a Scotch Presbyterian family which had emigrated to Londonderry, in northern Ireland, to avoid the persecutions of their church

begun under Charles I. When Matthew was four, the family was among 120 that moved still further on, to Boston. From there, they migrated to Wiscasset, about halfway up the Maine coast, a year later.

Sometime before Matthew turned fifteen, his father, James, had taken his eight children to Worcester, Massachusetts, probably so that he could farm under circumstances more favorable than could be found at Wiscasset. Over the next ten years Matthew worked on his father's farm, went to school, and was apprenticed to Dr. Thomas Green in nearby Leicester.

Dr. Green had learned the practice of medicine from two English surgeons who had been outlawed, as pirates, and who boarded with his father for several years. Although Green's obituary in a 1773 Boston paper described him as "a very noted physician," his chief role in Leicester was as the town's first Baptist minister. The Rev. Green was expected, as a minister, to fill both the medical and the religious needs of his parish, as did many of his colleagues.

Theocracy was not quite dead in Massachusetts in 1740 when the Puritan majority of Worcester tried to force the Presbyterians, too, to pay taxes toward the support of the town's Congregational church. Although the Puritans shared their Calvinist beliefs with the Presbyterian newcomers, the New Eng-

landers looked down on the immigrants as generic Irishmen. Two years earlier James Thornton had bought substantial amounts of land in the new Massachusetts town of Pelham, thirty miles northwest of Worcester, founded for "inhabitants of the Kingdom of Ireland or their descendants being Protestants." So Matthew's father, a Presbyterian farmer from Ireland, left Worcester for Pelham.

But Matthew, by then twenty-five years old and ready to go into medical practice on his own, moved on to Londonderry after another year or two, and there he lived and worked for almost forty years. Londonderry, like Pelham, had been settled largely by Scotch-Irish Presbyterian families, many of whom had come from Ulster with James Thornton twenty years earlier. They did not like to be called Irish; their allegiance was to their Scotch Presbyterian background. They built up the colony's largest manufacturing industry, linen cloth, by introducing the first foot-powered spinning wheels to New Hampshire, and they added potato cultivation to the colony's economy.

By the time Matthew Thornton arrived there, Londonderry, with a population of 2,600, was the second largest town in the colony, after Portsmouth. The town supported three taverns and two retailers of liquors, which were more than the inhabitants thought necessary, and two or three doctors at any one time during Thornton's lifetime. Thornton probably went to Londonderry because it would be better able than Pelham to support a physician, and because its people were like those he had always known.

Even so, affluence did not come quickly to the young physician. After ten years, he still owned no taxable property, but by 1757 he was able to buy a forty year old house which still stands. (A private home, it is in the present town of Derry, which separated from Londonderry in 1828). His practice must have continued to thrive. The royal governor granted the town of Dublin to Thornton, which was then settled by his brother William. Matthew was a patentee of at least eighteen other towns in the colony, and the chief proprietor of the town of Thornton, granted to him in 1763.

Four years later, in 1767, the population of the entire colony was 52,700; it in-

creased by fifty-four per cent, to 80,925, by the outbreak of the Revolution. The population of Londonderry remained stable during that time; the greatest growth occurred in agrarian areas, where the chief support for revolution would be found. Matthew's principal source of income, after his practice, came from the rural town of Thornton, which had 117 inhabitants by 1775, in about fifteen or twenty households. At that time the average population of New Hampshire towns was 550, a number small enough to make the democratic town meeting a workable mechanism for self-government.

Virtually nothing is known about the nature of Dr. Thornton's practice, but contemporary data for Portsmouth and other New Hampshire communities permit some inferences about his patient population. For instance, life expectancy at birth at the time was about thirty-two years. Infant mortality took a tremendous toll, but if the child survived the first five years of life, he could expect to reach the age of forty-seven, on the average, and if he reached fifty, he could expect to live another twenty years. In fact, his life expectancy would have been as much as five years greater among the relatively rural population that comprised Thornton's practice. Because infectious diseases were then the leading causes of death, it is not likely that he could have improved the life expectancy of his patients by much. And it is not known whether he was skilled in those surgical techniques that were in common use at the time, although their successful use could improve an individual's life expectancy.

The Provincial Assembly paid Dr. Thornton the immense sum of £25 for attending a man who had been injured in a riot on the Portsmouth docks in 1758, and an astounding £94/14/4 for caring for a sick soldier two years later. He drew a substantial income from both his practice and his tenants. For instance, he was among a number of prominent landlords who agreed, in 1758, to donate land for the use and benefit of the Indian Charity School being established by Eleazar Wheelock, so long as it was established on the Connecticut River, in order to stimulate trade. Thornton must have been pleased when the school was located at Hanover.

Not until 1760, at the age of forty-six, did Matthew Thornton marry. It seems unlikely that only his financial status delayed his assuming a new role, as head of a family. His bride, an eighteen year old girl also of Scotch descent, presented him with five children over the next ten years, all of whom survived to maturity.

Thornton, like other physicians in eighteenth century inland New Hampshire, may have relied on some of the therapeutic methods applied by the colony's Indians. They, for instance, poured warm water down the throat of a patient with a cold, or, if he had a fever, put him in a closed hut filled with steam. To treat arthritic pains, the patient was wrapped in heated sod, "till the heat of the turf was supposed to have extracted the pain."

The Indians preferred to keep their herb remedies to themselves, but eighteenth century New Hampshire physicians found a number of native plants that were suitable for medicinal purposes. They used the prickly ash for "chronic rheumatism," witch hazel for "inflammations," lobelia species for inducing vomiting or for the cure of syphilis ("a disease, with the name of which I will not stain my page") and the skunk cabbage for "asthmatic complaints." Other drug plants whose virtues were too well known to need repetition in the first history of the state were poke, elder, viburnum, maidenhair fern, snake root and buck bean. Other plants, although known to be poisonous, were regarded as therapeutic when given in small doses, such as water hemlock, thorn apple, henbane and nightshade. Yet others were always poisonous, like poison ivy and white hellebore.

Matthew Thornton's only other documented medical adventure was as undersurgeon to Col. Sylvester Richmond's regiment, which participated in the New England attack on Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, in 1745, when Thornton was thirty. Massachusetts Governor William Shirley planned the expedition in order to neutralize the French retreat for merchant and privateering ships during the War of the Austrian Succession (called King George's War in British North America). Although the capture of the great fortress was hailed as a major military vic-

tory in New England, it was actually a "mad frolic" of 4,200 undisciplined men. Of the 615 New Hampshire troops, five were killed and six died of illness during the six weeks' siege. Because Thornton's contemporaries expected that more would have died in the usual course of events, he was given much credit for his medical skill among the troops. As it turned out, the entire exercise was futile; in the final treaty

address to that body. He petitioned the Assembly in regard to fishing rights and restrictions on the Merrimack River, along which lay many of his land holdings.

In 1762 Thornton and a large number of Londonderry residents successfully petitioned the Provincial Assembly to set aside the election of Col. Samuel Barr to some post in the town, because

outbreak of hostilities in 1775, when royal commissions to judges were vacated automatically, he was justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas for Hillsborough County, as well as a justice of the peace.

A few years earlier, Governor Benning Wentworth had provoked widespread ridicule of the colony's justices of the peace when he appointed a large



The Fortress of Louisbourg, on the northern tip of Cape Breton Island, was the scene of Matthew Thornton's one military expedition as surgeon to the New Hampshire forces that successfully captured the French haven for privateers and warships in 1745.

three years later, England exchanged the fortress for Madras, India, although Wolfe would recapture it on his way to Quebec ten years later still.

Governor John Wentworth commissioned Matthew Thornton as colonel of the 8th (Londonderry) regiment in 1770. He sent one detachment off to Medford immediately after the Lexington and Concord alarm on 19 April 1775, and accepted reappointment as colonel of the regiment from the New Hampshire Provincial Congress that fall, but Thornton took no active part in any military actions of the Revolutionary War; he was over sixty when it began.

Thornton had entered public life by the time he was forty. In 1755 he helped collect evidence against a gang of counterfeiters operating near Londonderry. From 1758 to 1762 he represented his town in the Provincial Assembly and served on a committee to compliment the governor on his recent

of "illegal proceedings of the Town Meeting." It was after that that Thornton began to take a more active part in local politics instead of continuing to represent Londonderry at the capital in Portsmouth, where he would have been less likely to make substantial contributions. By 1770 he was a town selectman, and served as town moderator four times until 1776. However, all did not go entirely smoothly for the fledgling politician. In 1771, 186 inhabitants of the town complained to the Assembly of Thornton's actions as town moderator, referring to irregularities in the election of the town's representatives to the Assembly.

At the same time, Thornton also began to hold judicial office. He seems to have amassed sufficient capital, and insured to himself a sufficient income, between his practice and his extensive lands, to permit him to undertake more and more civic duties, most of which were poorly remunerated and were, in any event, only part-time jobs. From 1771 until the

number of them to fill in some serious gaps in the administration of colonial justice:

... When their worships manifold,
Like men divinely blessed of old,
Were bid "t' increase and multiply,"
Obsequious rose a numerous fry,
Who, ever prompt and nigh at hand,
Could scatter justice through the land.
Then, with important air and look,
The sons of Littleton and Coke
Swarming appear'd, to mind the Squires;
(What honours such a post requires!)
These skilful clerks, always attending,
Help'd to despatch all matters pending;
Took care that judgment (as it should)
Was rendered for the man that sued;
Aided their honours to indite,
And sign'd for those who could not write.
Who but must think these happy times,
When men, adroit to punish crimes,
Were close at hand? — and, what is better,
Made every little tardy debtor
Fulfill his contract, and to boot,
Pay twice his debt in costs of suit.

Such were the complaints of the people of rural New Hampshire against the colony's royal judges. Presumably Matthew Thornton was associated with the country party, not the court party attacked in this poetic satire. If so, it was perhaps in Thornton's early years on the bench that he first acquired his reputation for honesty — meaning his adherence to the opposition to the royal government which had appointed him to the bench in the first place.

The only story of his tenure of the bench may be apocryphal: a defense attorney, finding the associate justice asleep and Judge Thornton engrossed in a book, told the jury: "Gentlemen, my unfortunate client has no hope but in *your* attention, since the Court in their wisdom will not condescend to hear this case!" Thornton replied, "When you have anything to offer, Mr. _____, which is pertinent to the case on trial, the Court will be happy to hear you. Meantime I may as well resume my reading."

There were not enough trained lawyers to fill the needs of the bench in either colonial or independent America, so judicial appointments often were given to men from any of the several professions predicated on learning and judgment. Dr. Thornton was promoted by the revolutionary government of his state to the Superior Court in 1776, because of his experience in the lower courts. He retained this seat until 1782, when, because he was then sixty-eight years old, he declined reappointment.

Thus far, the life and work of Matthew Thornton have not been very different from those of many other physicians or politicians in late eighteenth century America. The special path that led him to become one of the fifty-six politicians, including five physicians, who signed the Declaration of Independence, began in January 1775, when Thornton was elected by Londonderry as its representative to the revolutionary second Provincial Congress, which chose two delegates to the Continental Congress scheduled to meet in Philadelphia in May.

Londonderry called a town meeting four days after the fights at Lexington and Concord, just as town meetings were being called all over New England shortly after 19 April 1775. Probably

because Thornton was chosen moderator again, he was delegated to draft an answer to a circular letter in which the Massachusetts Provincial Congress had requested assistance against the British troops. He was also sent to a meeting of the Massachusetts Congress in late May. A little later Thornton was elected president *pro tem* of the third Provincial Congress, called to discuss the organization of the New Hampshire militia.

Since the colonial government was about to collapse entirely — Governor John Wentworth had fled to the protection of British warships in Portsmouth Harbor — a fourth Provincial Congress was called for May 17. As colonel of the Londonderry regiment, Thornton sent a company of Londonderry men off to General Artemas Ward, the Massachusetts commander at the siege of Boston, with a prayer:

May Infinite Wisdom Direct America.
May Infinite Power Protect America.
May Infinite Goodness bring
peace, Light, & Order,
out of the present unnatural
war, Confusion, & Darkness.

Matthew Thornton again represented his town at the new Provincial Congress, which was shortly to assume the entire real governing authority of the province when Governor Wentworth left New Hampshire altogether in June. Thornton was immediately chosen president of the Congress because "we Esteem [him] to be zealously and earnestly devoted to the service of this country."

Although the Londonderry doctor presided over the fourth Provincial Congress, it is now all but impossible to determine to what extent he influenced its proceedings, or was responsible for the actual wording of its proclamations and correspondence, most of which he signed by virtue of his office. Nevertheless, his signatures on those documents did commit him to the front ranks of his colony's fellow traitors to the Crown.

As soon as the Congress had organized itself he was appointed to the most important of its working committees. He was on the committee to discover ways and means of furnishing troops for the siege of Boston, and was chairman of the all-important Commit-

tee of Safety. This five-man committee, which also included Dr. Josiah Bartlett of Kingston, assumed full executive and legislative power in New Hampshire during recesses of the Congress.

Following the final breakdown of royal government, the Provincial Congress needed advice on conducting its part of the Revolution. Thornton wrote to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia to ask how his province could best raise the money necessary for the two thousand troops it planned to maintain at Boston. He reported to the Massachusetts Committee of Safety that New Hampshire was unable to supply much powder to its neighboring state. He placed his name squarely on the list of the American rebels when he signed a circular letter to the inhabitants of New Hampshire in which the Congress deplored "those scenes of Blood and Devastation which the barbarous cruelty of British troops have placed before our eyes. Duty to God, to ourselves, to Posterity, enforced by the cries of slaughtered Innocents, have urged us to take up Arms in our Defence." This led him to write to Governor Wentworth, who was still under British protection in Portsmouth Harbor, to insist that the governor inform the Congress what steps he would take to defend the colony's citizens from the King.

After the Battle of Bunker Hill on 17 June 1775, Col. John Stark wrote to tell the Congress about the seventy-four New Hampshire men who had been wounded there, and the nineteen who had been killed or were missing. But it is not known what Thornton was doing for the rest of that summer, after he wrote to urge the Continental Congress not to order the demolition of Fort Ticonderoga, captured by Ethan Allen in May, because it was the major defense of New Hampshire's western frontier.

In early September Thornton sent the province's delegation to the Continental Congress its instructions for voting on any matters regarding a new national government: no taxation without representation, no trial without jury, and careful separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers. He went on to request advice as to how New Hampshire should administer justice and regulate the civil police since the disappearance of the royal government.

In reply, the Continental Congress urged New Hampshire to set up a government representative of its people. Thornton was summoned to meet a committee from Philadelphia at Cambridge to discuss problems involved in raising the army. When the committee was delayed, he returned to Londonderry, where his wife was ill. Besides, he wrote, he had not taken off his clothes for the past ten nights, because he had been so busy traveling. Another delegation was sent to meet the committee from Philadelphia.

When the Provincial Congress began to act on the recommendation from Philadelphia, it established a committee, under Thornton's chairmanship, to draft a plan for representative government for the province. Upon the plan's adoption, the fourth Provincial Congress dissolved itself.

Londonderry's town meeting sent Thornton to the fifth — and last — Provincial Congress, on December 5th. Again, he was chosen president, by "a great majority," and was chairman of a committee of fifteen charged to draft a wartime constitution for New Hampshire. The resulting document, adopted in January 1776 by the Congress, was the first written constitution adopted by any of the American colonies, an act of total independence from the mother country. It continued in force until a new one was approved by the people of the state in 1783.

Immediately upon adopting the 1776 constitution, the Provincial Congress resolved itself into a House of Representatives, and Matthew Thornton was elected its speaker. However, because he was also raised to the new state's upper house, the Council, he had to relinquish the more powerful, but less prestigious, position as speaker. A month later, Londonderry officially elected him to the House. The old Committee of Safety continued to exercise all authority during recesses of the new House. Over the next eight years, until the permanent constitution went into effect, its members included eight merchants, four physicians, two large landowners, two lawyers and two farmers, each of whom served an average of twenty-one months. This supreme governing body was hardly representative of the entire state, much less of its predominantly rural agrarian popula-

tion, but at least the Wentworth-dominated oligarchy was out of office. Even Tories could admire the new government's efficiency; one wrote that "New Hampshire had never a more energetic government, nor a more honest executive." Matthew Thornton had at least two constituencies behind him: more physicians, as well as more Presbyterians of Scotch-Irish descent, were for the Revolution than against it.

Matthew Thornton may have had some special military expertise, perhaps dating from his unrecorded days as colonel of his local regiment. George Washington asked his advice about recruiting both men and arms, and Thornton visited the New Hampshire troops at Winter Hill (in modern Somerville, near Boston), to consult with the state's commanding officers about recruitment.

On 11 June 1776 the New Hampshire House of Representatives, and the Council, voted unanimously to draft a "declaration of this General Assembly for Independence of the United Colonies," and sent instructions to its delegates in Philadelphia to vote for national independence. It is not clear whether the House knew that the Continental Congress was about to debate the same momentous issue.

The final turning of Matthew Thornton's road to Philadelphia began on June 25, when one of New Hampshire's delegates to Congress, John Langdon, was appointed Agent of Prizes for the state. Because that was a profitable government position, he had to resign his seat at Philadelphia, and New Hampshire had to choose a third delegate to join William Whipple and Josiah Bartlett. Thornton was elected by the House to a one year term on 12 September 1776. Two weeks later he accepted formally, and made plans to go to Philadelphia in mid-October with Mrs. Thornton (although it is not certain that she did go), at the end of the current court session over which he was then presiding.

Dr. Thornton arrived in Philadelphia on November 3, complaining of the wretched roads he had had to travel. The next day he presented his credentials to the Continental Congress, and added his signature to those of the other two members of the New Hampshire delegation to the Declaration of

Independence. On July 19 the Congress had resolved that, after the Declaration had been properly engrossed, it was to "be signed by every member of Congress." Consequently, it was not so much Thornton's right as his duty to again declare for rebellion against George III. Although he signed the document three months after most members of the Congress had done so, he was not the last — Thomas McKean of Delaware did not add his signature for another five years. In fact, not all the signatories had voted for independence on July 4th, even if present at the time. The Congress announced the results of the vote on that date, but did not announce the names of those who signed until January 1777, to protect them from possible royalist reprisals.

The best evidence of Thornton's personality dates from his months in Philadelphia. Benjamin Rush, the leading physician in the Congress, remembered him as: "A practitioner of physic, of Irish extraction. He abounded in anecdotes, and was for the most part happy in the application of them. He was ignorant of the world, but was believed to be a sincere patriot and an honest man." Another observer tells that "his countenance was invincibly grave, like that of Cassius, who read much and never smiled; and this trait is the more remarkable as he was distinguished for his good humoured hilarity."

After meeting Dr. Thornton, John Adams wrote home to his wife, Abigail:

We have from New Hampshire a Colonel Thornton, a physician by profession, a man of humor. He has a large budget of droll stories with which he entertains company perpetually. I heard, about twenty or five-and-twenty years ago, a story of a physician in Londonderry, who accidentally met with one of our New England enthusiasts [this would have been at about the time of the mid-century religious revival], called exhorters. The fanatic soon began to examine the Dr. concerning the articles of his faith and what he thought of original sin. 'Why,' says the Dr., 'I satisfy myself about it in this manner. Either original sin is divisible or indivisible. If it is divisible, every descendant of Adam and Eve must

have a part, and the share which falls to each individual at this day is so small a particle that I think it is not worth considering. If indivisible, then the whole quantity must have descended in a right line, and must now be possessed by one person only; and the chances are millions and millions and millions to one that that person is now in Asia or Africa, and that I have nothing to do with it.' I told Thornton the story, and that I suspected him to be the man. He said he was.

Five days after he arrived in Philadelphia, Thornton had himself inoculated against smallpox. His own description of the adventure provides the best available testimony to his humor, at the expense of his own profession:

during our confinement, we had the honor to be attended by Dr. Cash, Dr. Surly, Dr. Critical Observer, Dr. Gay, and Dr. Experience, in the following order, viz: Between the hours of 10 and 11, A.M., Dr. Cash, 'how is't Sir and Mad'm,' and whatever our complaints were, his answer was, 'all's pretty,' and vanished in a second. He was the operator [inoculator], and for a few days, visited us as above; and we saw no more of him, till I paid his bill of 18 dollars. Dr. Surly came two or three times each day as a friend, viewed us through his glasses, and then, with a smiling grin, softly said, 'what, no worse yet? this is but trifling to what you will feel, before all is over.' Dr. Critical Observer, a young doctor, that told me he would critically observe every stage of the Small Pox in us, to gain experience, came once in two or three days, and stayed about a minute each time. Dr. Gay, a young doctor, that came as a friend two or three times every day, tripped round and sung a tune, and told us 'all would end well,' Dr. Experience, a merchant, who has had the Small Pox, visited us every day, and gave a much truer account of the Small Pox, than all the doctors.

Matthew Thornton is not counted among New Hampshire's most able and talented delegates to the Continental Congress. He did serve on several



Portrait of Matthew Thornton (1714-1803). The artist is unknown, although the painting is probably a copy of an original.

lesser committees of the Congress, but there is a sense in his few surviving letters home that he felt out of his element in all the political activity surrounding the birth of the new nation. Among his assignments were the committee to develop new sources of saltpeter for use in manufacturing gunpowder, another to investigate the conduct of Major General Schuyler, and, with Oliver Wolcott, the committee to prepare instructions to Congress's Indian agents.

Neither does Dr. Thornton's name appear among official lists of members of the medical committee. However, in April 1777 he wrote, for that committee, to Dr. Jonathan Potts at Ticonderoga, about the Congress's new plans and arrangements for the medical department of the army. He assured Potts that handsome salaries had been voted, in order to attract the best physicians to the service of their country.

A few months earlier, Thornton had criticized the army's physicians and suppliers: "An inexcusable Neglect in the Officers, want of Fidelity [sic], Honour, and Humanity, in the Drs and averice [sic] in the Suttlers, has Slain ten Soldiers to the Enemies one, and will Soon prevent every man of Common Sense from putting his Life and Fortune in the Power of Such as Destroy both without pity or mercy." Although Thornton probably exaggerated to some extent, the Americans did lose nine men to disease for every man lost in battle; among the British the ratio was only five to one.

In December 1775 the Congress fled to Baltimore, because, reported Thornton,

the news of Howe's army, on their march to Philadelphia, induced the Congress to adjourn to this town, where the man with boots has very

great advantages of a man with shoes. The carriages are stopped by the depth of the mire in the middle of the street. — The ladies, with silk gowns and shoes, make a fine figure. — From [the time] we left home, the prayers and graces became shorter every stage, until we hear neither. The religion is, take all advantage, pay your debt, and do as you please.

It was not only Baltimore's winter mud that depressed Thornton. The Congressional confusion induced by the move must have been inflated in the mind of the relatively elderly newcomer. He had received no public instructions or private letters since he left home in October, and he had not been able to write many letters himself, because of the "uselessness of my Eyes, Since the Small Pox."

The New Hampshire House of Representatives voted in December 1776 to continue Thornton's commission to represent the state for a year from January 1777. In declining the reappointment, he pleaded that "my constitution and circumstances oblige me humbly to ask leave to return home next spring. The necessity of having good men in Congress is so evident, that I shall only beg they may be sent in time." After all, he was sixty-three by then, and may have felt that he had done all he could. The House seems to have dragged its feet in choosing a successor. Thornton wrote home from Philadelphia in early April that "my constitution will not allow my staying here longer than next May." On the same day, however, a successor had been chosen, and on May 2 he returned to Londonderry.

Having retired from active medical practice at the beginning of the war, Matthew Thornton continued to participate in public affairs for another twelve years. Besides remaining on the bench, he helped prepare the permanent state constitution that went into effect after the war. He developed detailed plans for combating the inflation which was ravaging the state, and which may have substantially reduced his own income. He urged that a boundary dispute with neighboring Vermont be settled amicably, so that the two states would not fall into war as Britain and America had. Until 1787 Thornton alternated in representing Merrimack in the new House, of

Hillsborough County in the new Senate, and was elected from the ranks of the House to serve on the council. He retired from public life completely in 1789, after the death of his wife and one son.

Towards the end of the war, in December 1781, Thornton wrote an elegy on Col. Alexander Scammel who had died in October at Yorktown, at the age of thirty-three. There is no evidence for a relationship between the two men; perhaps the poem was but an exercise in the chauvinistic memorial literature of the day:

Ye weeping Muses, Graces, Virtues,
tell
How all-accomplished COL'NEL SCAMMEL
fell;
You, nor afflicted heroes ne'er deplor'd
A loss like that these plaintive lines
record.
Such spotless honor, such ingenuous
truth,
Such ripen'd wisdom in the bloom of
youth.
So mild, so gentle, so compos'd a mind,
To such heroic warmth and courage
join'd.
His early youth was nurs'd in learning's
arms,
For nobler war, forsook her peaceful
charms;
He was possess'd of every pleasing art,
The secret joy of every honest heart;
He was cut off in youthful glory's pride,
Yet unrepining for his country died.

In 1778 Dr. Thornton purchased a farm near Exeter so that he would be closer to the courts there and at Portsmouth. He maintained his interest in the new state's government long after his retirement, and attended sessions of the House, as a spectator, as late as 1798, at the age of eighty-four. In 1780 he moved to Merrimack, where he bought a house confiscated from a Tory who had fled the state. Three years later the legislature gave him the exclusive right to ferry passengers across the river, which flowed by his house, to Litchfield. The area is still known as Thornton's Ferry. Its chief adornments today are the cemetery where Thornton and many of his family are buried, and the monument erected to his memory in 1892.

Save for Thornton's honesty and humor, only remote hearsay evidence exists as to other aspects of his per-

sonality. The author of one biographical sketch, written twenty-one years after Thornton's death, wrote that "as a physician, he gained the confidence of the people by his skill and punctuality." Other tributes to him — appearing chiefly among collated biographies of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, the heroes of the first century of the new republic — are so unreservedly eulogistic that they appear stereotyped and are difficult to verify at this late date.

The accompanying portrait, which hangs in the Governor's Council Chamber in Concord, seems to confirm the report that he never smiled. He seems to be in his thirties, near the beginning of his medical career. He is said to have been over six feet in height, and to have had whooping cough at the age of eighty. He had a "slight palsy of the vocal organs" for many years before then, manifested as a minor speech difficulty.

Dr. Thornton died suddenly, on 24 June 1803, at the age of eighty-nine, while visiting his daughter in Newburyport, Massachusetts. The inventory of his estate shows that he had succeeded financially. Its total value was just over \$24,000, a substantial sum in a time when a cow was valued at about \$14, a yoke of oxen at \$57, an acre of farm land at \$4, and a large pewter basin at 25¢. Half of the estate was in credits, and half in real estate. Because almost all of the property was in Thornton, he may have had to sell his holdings in other parts of the state during the war to keep up with the outrageous inflation.

So much for the path Dr. Matthew Thornton took through the politics of Revolutionary America, but *why* did he enter upon that path? In the twentieth century, his revolutionary leanings have been attributed to his Scotch-Irish Protestantism, but only by association. For instance, it has been pointed out that the New England Protestants, as a group, viewed the Quebec Act of 1774, which permitted the free exercise of Catholic practice in Canada and south to the Ohio River, as a Tory government move to subvert their own religion.

On the other hand, Thornton's earliest biographical sketchers were reluctant to count him among the members of

any organized religion, although they awarded him high marks for traditional Christian virtues, and for regular attendance at church services. These biographers, or perhaps informants who had known Thornton themselves, all knew that he had written a seventy-three page manuscript entitled *Paradise Lost, or the Origin of the Evil, Called Sin, Examined*; it was never published. Written in the last fifteen years of his life, during his retirement to an agricultural and contemplative life, the few pages that still survive are concerned with a Creator as the primary moving force behind all the activities of men, animals and even the waters of the rivers and seas. Thornton did not reason from a Presbyterian God, but from a deistic Creator who has

placed in every free accountable agent to whom he has given common sense (and none but such can be accountable) a desire of happiness, and from this arises a wish to be happy, and fear that he may be miserable. . . . And hope or fear operates and influences the choice; and which soever it is, the intention is the happiness of the chooser. For no rational being, exercising reason, can choose to be miserable. . . . [All creatures made by the Creator] fear an enemy: self defence is implanted in their natures.

These principles are the same as those of the authors of the Declaration of Independence fifteen to twenty years earlier. Benjamin Franklin, for one, who counted himself "a thorough deist," had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian, but left his church at the age of twenty-nine. He, too, wrote of the choice between pleasure and pain. Thornton's "Creator" is the same Infinite Goodness, Power and Wisdom that he had invoked in the prayer for success he sent to Artemas Ward at the siege of Boston. When Thornton, as president of the Provincial Congress in May 1775, wrote to the Continental Congress offering to raise two thousand men for the self-defense of America against "the scenes of pillage and slaughter perpetrated by the sons of violence," he also appealed to "the great Fountain of wisdom, and Friend of Justice [to] inspire the guardians of our common rights." Finally, he was concerned with opposing "the Schemes &

Devices of those who seek our Ruin" and "these Cruel Measures which have been devised for enslaving America."

That enslavement was a possibility to be feared by Americans was exemplified by the fate of Ireland. James Otis of Boston lamented, in a popular pamphlet, that Ireland and other British colonies are "forever excluded from returning members to the British Parliament, [although] Parliament [can] impose external and internal taxes on them and take from them every subordinate power of local legislation." In another widely read analysis of the deteriorating relationship between Britain and America, John Dickinson of Philadelphia used the Irish example to illustrate the purposeful subjection of an entire people by the exploitation of its national income to finance pensions awarded to Englishmen who had achieved favor with the ministry and court.

Revolutionary Americans recognized that the Irish had already lost many of the freedoms that were most valued on this side of the Atlantic, and feared that those freedoms would disappear in the colonies, too. Ireland's list of grievances against England was long: there was no habeas corpus in Ireland; both Catholics and Protestant dissenters were disfranchised and forbidden to hold civil or military office; although Ireland had a Parliament, it could not initiate legislation, because the British Parliament maintained its supremacy over the country; judges were appointed at the pleasure of the Crown, and so could be manipulated at the pleasure of the incumbent ministry; and, most seriously in the Americans' view, money for pensions was being drained from the island for the sole profit of absentee and corrupt court officials. Some Irish writers even claimed that Parliament had been practicing on their country, in preparation for an intended subjugation of America. The parallels became more frightening after the Boston massacre, when it was realized that only in Ireland and America had British regulars ever fired upon English civilians.

Although many of the British anti-Irish measures were directed against Catholics, some were specifically directed against the Presbyterians from Scotland. For instance, they were taxed

for the support of Anglican rectors in Ulster, much as James Thornton was threatened with taxes for the support of the Puritan church in Worcester. Parliament passed trade acts that discriminated against the linen and woollen industries upon which the Scotch immigrants to Ireland depended in the absence of sufficient farm land. Consequently, Scotch-Irish Presbyterians like James Thornton's family fled from Ulster in large numbers. About four thousand of them came to America in 1718, the year the Thorntons did. By 1775, two hundred thousand of them had settled here, making them the largest non-English group in the colonies. Their earlier training in the democratic principles of the Presbyterian church flourished in the town meeting system of government in agriculturally promising New England.

The most dramatic statement of the Scotch-Irish settlers of the area is found in a letter from the town of Pelham, Massachusetts, of which Matthew Thornton's father had been a founder in 1738-40. In reply to a circular letter from the Boston Committee of Correspondence, the people of Pelham convened in town meeting in November 1773 to point out that they had been driven across the ocean to

seek a peaceful Retreat from the voice of oppression in this American wilderness. . . . We have still a more feeling sense of the worth of our liberties by the total loss of them in the Conquered kingdom of Ireland where, altho' made of the same one blood, they have a yoke of iron upon their Necks, and they must serve their Conquerors with as much of their money and Blood, as they are pleased to Demand, and Sustain more Intolerable oppressions from the Legislative masters and unfeeling Landlords, than some of the Barbarous nations Conquered by the Ancient Romans, before the wane of their Empire.

Colonial physicians have been characterized as holding only modest or even, according to Benjamin Rush, "slavish" rank in early American society, below ministers and lawyers. These physicians have been looked down upon by some later observers because they regarded their profession as a trade, a

source of income. It has also been postulated that when colonial physicians were poorly paid they were likely to seek public office and military commissions to supplement their professional earnings.

Matthew Thornton seems not to fit this model of the colonial physician. When the dignitaries of New Hampshire joined in a carefully ordered procession to celebrate the ratification of the Federal Constitution in 1788, physicians followed the clergy, but led the lawyers (one wonders whether Thornton marched as a physician, a judge or a legislator) and the military. The same order of march was used to welcome President Washington to Boston a year later. In both towns, the artisans, tradesmen and working classes were clearly separated from the professional groups. The physicians of the Portsmouth area were memorialized in the same terms as members of other professions in the first history of that town. And those same physicians moved both socially and professionally in the "highest" circles of New Hampshire's social structure, just as they did in Boston.

After Matthew Thornton had proved his worth as a physician in Londonderry, he was able to invest the extra income he had saved in land, an even more remunerative venture. Only then did he enter into public service. Although he was first appointed to the bench by the royal government, he seems not to have been a King's man, which would have been the more profitable position for him to have taken. In the absence of contrary data, it seems that Thornton was able to continue in public service in the new and not very wealthy state only because he had already insured his livelihood. Otherwise, it is unlikely that his epitaph would have read "The Honest Man."

Consequently, it is equally unlikely that Matthew Thornton used public service, or his political career, as a means of rising above his professional status as a physician. He seems to have become a rebel because of his cultural heritage, especially when it was threatened for the second time.

He was probably not unusual among physicians in his state. Nor was he unusual in his ethnic background. Nor in

his political activities. Colonial American physicians have also been described as religious skeptics or irreligious, even atheists. Thornton seems not to fit this model either, unless his apparent deism so qualifies him. His precise chain of reasoning for entering on the path to rebellion has not come down to us. We have few clues to his feelings about the way the British treated their North American colonists, and he surely knew the anti-British fears of his Scotch-Irish Presbyterian countrymen. It was only by chance that he happened to join the legendary fifty-six who signed the Declaration of Independence two hundred years ago, but it was not by chance that the honest doctor took a leading, although unobtrusive, role in Revolutionary politics in his adopted state.

Bibliographical Note

It seems a little sad that virtually all that is known of Matthew Thornton can be compassed within so few pages. Nothing new about him has been published since Charles T. Adams' *Matthew Thornton of New Hampshire: A Patriot of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1903), which lacks references throughout its sixty-one pages. Although many statements in it could be verified from scarce primary and archival sources, it does contain a few minor errors of fact. Major archival sources include Nathaniel Bouton, et al., eds., *Documents and Records Relating to New Hampshire*, forty vols. (Concord & Manchester, 1867-1941); John Farmer & J. B. Moore, *Collections, Historical and Miscellaneous, Relating Principally to New Hampshire*, three vols. (Concord, 1822); and the MS. *Londonderry Town Records 1770-1804* in the New Hampshire Historical Society (Concord).

Jeremy Belknap described Thornton's New Hampshire in his *History of New Hampshire*, three vols.; I used the second ed. (Boston, 1813). The essential background of the state's political development in the eighteenth century is described in Richard F. Upton, *Revolutionary New Hampshire*, first published in 1936 (Port Washington, N.Y., Kennikat, 1970), and in Jere R. Daniell, *Experiment in Republicanism* (Cambridge, Harvard, 1970).

My own earlier studies of medicine in Revolutionary New Hampshire provided the framework in which Thornton's professional life should be able to be evaluated, but could not, because we have no data pertaining to his own work as a physician. See, for instance, the following, all by J. Worth Estes: "The Health of Revolutionary America," *Harvard Med. Alumni Bull.* 49, no. 4 Mar/Apr 1975, 16-21; "As healthy a place as any in America: Revolutionary Portsmouth, New Hampshire," *Bull. Hist. Med.*, in press; "An account of the foxglove in America," *Bull. Hist. Med.* 47: 394-408, 1973; "An eighteenth-century clinicopathological correlation," *Bull. N.Y. Acad. Med.*, in press. One other model of Thornton's professional contemporaries is presented in Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., "A portrait of the colonial physician," *Bull. Hist. Med.* 44: 497-517, 1970.

The most thorough discussions of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in America are in Richard Hofstadter, *America at 1750* (New York, Vintage, 1973), 18, 24-32, and in Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution* (New York, Knopf, 1973), 178-180.

The professional staffs of several libraries and historical societies provided indispensable help in my pursuit of Dr. Thornton, but special thanks are due to Mrs. Harriett Lacey and Dr. Frank C. Mevers at the New Hampshire Historical Society. Professor Richard L. Bushman of Boston University directed me toward the Revolutionary American pamphlets and letters on the enslavement of Ireland.

Josiah Bartlett

Josiah Bartlett: Dedicated Physician, Sterling Patriot

by Frank C. Mevers

Among the five physicians who signed "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America" Josiah Bartlett of New Hampshire could probably claim one of the longer and more varied terms of public service. Over a period of nearly four decades, from 1757 to 1794, Dr. Bartlett served as town selectman, county justice of the peace, colonial and state legislator, colonel of colonial and state militia regiments, delegate to the Continental Congress, member of the New Hampshire executive council, chief justice of the state superior court, and as president and governor of the state. Although public office claimed so much of his time, it should be remembered that his career as a physician was just as important to him as was the most sacred public trust.

Josiah Bartlett was not a native of New Hampshire: he was born in Amesbury, Massachusetts, on November 21, 1729. His meticulous account books and the handwriting, spelling and grammar in his voluminous correspondence reveal that he received more than a rudimentary education in boyhood. His family, however, was not wealthy. Unable to attend college in Europe or in America, Josiah retreated to the library of a relative in Amesbury, Dr. Nehemiah Ordway, from which he learned the fundamentals of a medical career. Bartlett spent about six years under the guidance of Dr. Ordway before setting out on a medical practice of

his own. In 1750 he found that Kingston, New Hampshire, a town of less than one thousand population, needed a physician. At the same time that Bartlett reached Kingston another young physician also arrived; but Dr. Bartlett's strong personality, as demonstrated in his work and writing throughout the remainder of his life, dominated the attention of the people and soon established him as the town's choice.

The first piece of correspondence among Dr. Bartlett's numerous extant papers is a letter from Hannah Kent of Newburyport that accompanied a package for him containing gentian, curcuma, spice and other supplies. Merchant Kent agreed to take "Hampshir mony" for the goods but warned that it would cost the doctor more. Presumably, young Dr. Bartlett was glad to receive the items and sent an order to cover their cost. If the bills that survive are any indication, Bartlett's practice increased tremendously over the next twenty years. Bills and receipts remain from Joseph Manning of Ipswich, Edmund Sawyer of Newburyport, Daniel Rogers of Portsmouth, Josiah Gilman of Exeter and others from New Market, Boston and Portsmouth.

While increasing his practice, Dr. Bartlett underwent a personal illness which, according to memoirs written by his eldest son Levi, changed his view of one medical treatment. Attacked by a raging fever in 1752, Dr. Bartlett ordered his

attendants, against the instructions of his physician, Dr. Ordway of Amesbury, to bring him some cider. Several drafts of the cider taken in small quantities during the night apparently quieted the fever and the young physician recovered. Bartlett thereafter maintained a loyalty to cider and to other coolants as opposed to hot regimens theretofore prescribed for feverish patients. He may also have been the first in his region to use Peruvian bark, or quinine, as an antiphlogistic to combat diphtheria in 1754-1755.

Bartlett increased his public activities during the 1750s and firmly established himself not only as Kingston's physician but also as one of its leading citizens. The town records show that he first served as a selectman in 1757. During the French and Indian War he treated several townsmen sent back with wounds and disease. Town records also show that he was paid for attending paupers at public expense. His account books are large and record an increasing number of treatments per day. By the time he was elected to sit in the colonial House of Representatives of New Hampshire in 1765 Dr. Bartlett had a practice large enough to share with a partner, Dr. Amos Gale. Bartlett remained in the House, becoming increasingly influential, until its final dissolution by exiled royal governor John Wentworth in 1775. Between the summers of 1774 and 1775 four provincial congresses (extra-legal bodies which were formed primarily to support the

Continental Congress in Philadelphia) convened in New Hampshire — at all of them Dr. Bartlett represented Kingston, while concurrently serving in the legal House. In August 1775, following Governor Wentworth's flight from the province in June, the fourth Provincial Congress elected Dr. Bartlett to represent New Hampshire in the Continental Congress. The Congress was to meet in September in continuation of its session begun in May.

By the time Bartlett first attended the colonial legislature in 1765 he had a settled family in Kingston. On January 15, 1754, he married a cousin, Mary Bartlett, daughter of Sarah Hoit and Joseph Bartlett, of Newtown, New Hampshire. The memoirs state that Dr. Bartlett was sought after by many lovely and wealthy young women of the area, but that Mary won his attention by perseverance. Tradition has it that on a stormy night Mary knocked on Josiah's door imploring him to visit a sick relative. She then led him to an abandoned farmhouse where she laughed playfully at his gullibility and irritation. Throughout the thirty-five years of their marriage Mary's display of strong character proved that Josiah had chosen his mate wisely. The couple had ten children, two of whom died in infancy. By the time Dr. Bartlett left for Philadelphia in 1775 there were five daughters and three sons, a number of whom were capable of helping their mother tend the younger children, take care of the house and manage the farm on which the family subsisted.

Of interest during these first years of his practice, before public service claimed most of his attention, is the fact that Dr. Bartlett trained two apprentices in the 1760s. Joseph Bartlett, a nephew, observed his uncle's practice in Kingston and then moved to Salisbury, New Hampshire, where he maintained his own for many years. The other student, Amos Gale, remained in Kingston, where he and Bartlett formed a medical partnership. For the remainder of Dr. Bartlett's life Gale continued to be a close friend and neighbor. One of the Bartlett daughters married Dr. Gale's son, Dr. Amos Gale, Jr.

With his election to the General Assembly in 1765 Josiah Bartlett spent an increasing amount of time on public



Josiah Bartlett's pocket medical case circa 1770. This and his other personal artifacts are at the Bartlett Homestead, Kingston, New Hampshire.

business and away from Kingston and his medical practice. Extant bills and receipts for medicine and medical supplies dwindle in the early 1770s, but his account books testify that he actively continued his medical practice. The house that he and Mary had expanded as their family increased, burned in 1774, undoubtedly destroying many of his early papers. Because much of his time that year was taken up overseeing the reconstruction of the dwelling (which still stands today occupied by descendants of the Bartlett family), Bartlett was unable to attend the first session of the Continental Congress. The first Provincial Congress of New Hampshire elected him a delegate, but its members understood his need to decline. When Fort William and Mary in Portsmouth harbor was raided by New Hampshire patriots in December 1774 Dr. Bartlett was unable to play more than a secondary role. Nevertheless, the British governor, aware of Bartlett's influence, dismissed him from his militia office as well as from his office of justice of the peace.

It was not until he was reappointed in August 1775 that Bartlett was able to attend the Continental Congress. That body had reconvened in May with John Langdon and John Sullivan represent-

ing New Hampshire. Sullivan soon left to join the Continental Army, and for most of the duration of the war he led New Hampshire troops as a general. Langdon stayed on for the session until it recessed briefly in August. Together he and Bartlett traveled to Philadelphia between September 5 and 15, the journey then requiring from ten days to two weeks, usually depending most heavily on weather conditions.

Once in Philadelphia Bartlett had himself inoculated by Dr. Benjamin Rush against smallpox, which he reported was ravaging the capital city. He was not certain that inoculation was the wisest policy, but he soon decided to have it done and, in the end, expressed satisfaction at his decision: "I Can now with pleasure inform you that I have been Inoculated for the Small Pox and am almost Got well of it. I had it very favorable not about 20 Pock or thereabout tho I was Confined by the fever to the House 5 or 6 Days." The procedure kept him from sitting in Congress for some days, as he reported, but his attendance thereafter was regular.

His letters home were regular too — he wrote to Mary practically every week while in Congress, and after a brief return visit home by Josiah in April of

1776 Mary began writing to him with the same regularity. His correspondence, account books and other papers reflect the highest possible moral principles. On occasion he revealed hurt at being slighted by others, and he was extremely sensitive regarding the feelings of those with whom he dealt. Josiah's penmanship reveals a physically strong hand. In expression his letters are clear and concise without being stiff. His was a real world where practical affairs far outweighed the tragedies that so often affected others. Politically, as in dress and finance, Bartlett was moderate rather than staunchly conservative. He watched every farthing (his and the public's) very closely and yet took great delight in the Continental lottery and in providing a few feminine luxuries for his wife and daughters. He sometimes opined on affairs of state but more often wrote only guarded comments. His letters from Philadelphia and York reveal more about his character than he probably intended.

In spite of his continuous pleas to the New Hampshire General Court and Committee of Safety (the body that administered provincial government during recesses of the general legislature) for relief, he remained in Congress until able to take a brief and needed respite in Kingston in April 1776. He rode back to Philadelphia in May to remain until the first of November. During this second portion of his first "term" in Congress, Dr. Bartlett served on the committee charged with drawing up a draft of the Articles of Confederation. On July 2 he voted in favor of the principle of independence from Britain; on July 4 he voted in favor of the draft of the Declaration of Independence; and on August 2 he signed the engrossed copy of that document. It has been said that he was the first to sign after John Hancock.

One of America's more eminent scholars of the American Revolution has referred to Bartlett as a moderate, middle-of-the-road member of the committee to draft the Articles of Confederation. Although that document was not finally ratified by the states until 1781, the basic parts of it were decided upon and written during the summer of 1776. Josiah was back in Philadelphia in July 1778 when the engrossed copy of the Articles, passed by Congress the previous November, was signed, putting him in a distinct group of signers —

another of whom was Oliver Wolcott — of both the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. Dr. Bartlett was anxious to preserve states' rights, as is shown by a clause in Article II of a draft in his handwriting, thought to be his major contribution to that document. The establishment of a strong central government was also one of his major goals but he found it necessary to compromise on that point in order to form any sound government at all.

While the committee of thirteen was drafting the Articles, a smaller committee was drawing up a proposed declaration of independence for the colonies. Not all the congressmen were in favor of this course, but Dr. Bartlett had for some time thought that the binding chains should be broken. To his wife in early June he wrote: "I hope the Americans will play the man for their Country & for their all, and that kind providence



The watch supposed to have been saved by Bartlett when his house burned in 1774.



The leather breeches allegedly worn on trips to Philadelphia in 1776 and 1778.

will give us success & victory that the wickedness and villany of our enemies will fall on their own heads, and that America may be for ever separated from the tyranny of Britain." Not being on the committee to draft the Declaration, Bartlett saw it only when the committee presented it to Congress. On July 1 Bartlett informed John Langdon that independence had that day been considered: "The Declaration before Congress is, I think, a pretty good one

— I hope it will not be spoiled by canvassing in Congress." It was not spoiled, and on August 2 he and William Whipple signed the engrossed copy for New Hampshire. Not surprisingly, Bartlett said little about independence in his correspondence. In noting that New York's sanction made acceptance of the Declaration unanimous he summed up his feeling clearly: "The Unparalleled conduct of our Enemies have united the Colonies more firmly than ever."

The many weighty matters before the Continental Congress made duty in that body fatiguing at best. Because there was no executive branch of government, Congress found that the only way to administer any branch of operations was through committees of congressmen. Consequently there were standing committees, usually comprised of one delegate from each state, responsible for the various departments: the marine committee in charge of the navy; the military committee in charge of the army; the secret committee responsible for securing essential supplies from overseas; the medical committee; and many more on all of which



Portrait of Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795) by Alonzo Slafter, probably painted in the late nineteenth century. It is a copy of the painting by John Trumbull in 1836, which itself is based on a pencil sketch done by Trumbull in 1790.

the membership was necessarily undergoing continual change as congressmen came and went and states appointed or elected new members in their stead.

Josiah Bartlett served actively on many committees, the most important being the marine and the secret. When New Hampshire was assigned one of the vessels to be built for the Continental navy in December 1775 Bartlett secured the agency for his friend John Langdon, a Portsmouth shipper. Langdon, besides having been Bartlett's former colleague in Congress, was one of the more influential men in New Hampshire's state government during the Revolutionary period. As New Hampshire's representative, Bartlett also secured the marine committee's draft of the ship and several installments of money with which Langdon

purchased construction materials. Some pieces, especially cannon, proved difficult to obtain in New England. Although the *Raleigh* was launched in May 1776, the first of those authorized by Congress to be launched, it could not put to sea for some months due to the difficulty of obtaining supplies. Two years later the physician was instrumental in getting the *Ranger* built. As a member of the secret committee, Dr. Bartlett signed many letters to agents and merchants in hopes of securing vital supplies from overseas producers.

The committees occasionally met in the morning but more often in the evening following daily congressional sessions. It is known that the meetings, held in a public room of a tavern, sometimes lasted until midnight. Membership on more than one committee often dictated

that delegates miss one or another of the meetings they felt obliged to attend.

Weather, prices and lack of exercise were prominent themes of the letters Josiah Bartlett wrote to his wife. January 1776 brought cold, snowy weather to Philadelphia. The first ships of the Continental navy were able to leave their Philadelphia wharves the second week in January, but got down the Delaware River only as far as Reedy Island before being blocked in by ice until mid-February. Although he consistently condemned the high prices of everything in the capital, Dr. Bartlett managed to secure a few articles of finery for his wife and daughters. His primary complaint was about the lack of exercise forced upon him by continuous sessions of Congress, committee meetings and inclement weather. His few rides on horseback or on sleigh received notable attention in his letters as did his walks. During the winter of 1776 and later on he suffered from constant headaches he was certain were brought on by lack of exercise.

At the age of forty-six Dr. Bartlett must have been a relatively strong man physically. In the only known sketch of him, drawn by John Trumbull in 1790, some sixteen years later, his features are still reflected as strong. His countenance displays a firmness usually associated with New England, yet his family correspondence reveals a passionate soul, loving of his wife, and tender and understanding toward his children. Although his papers reveal nothing specific about his accommodations while serving in Congress, they do leave the general impression that they were satisfactory. It seems likely that the physician would have noted any dire discrepancies in sanitation, food or cooking at the boarding houses in which he was dwelling.

In fact, he did find the town of York, Pennsylvania, dirty when he returned to Congress in May 1778. The Congress had moved to York when the British took possession of Philadelphia. Early in July the delegates returned to Philadelphia, where they remained until Dr. Bartlett's second "term" expired in November 1778. During this period they were concerned with completion of the Articles of Confederation, the recently concluded peace with France and reception of the French minister to

Congress, as well as with military and naval affairs. The Continental navy lacked the leadership achieved by George Washington and his staff. Privateering made difficult the recruiting of seamen and officers. Bartlett recognized the advantages of privateering and recognized also that at that early period the nation could not "expect to have a Navy sufficient to cope with the British." He was, however, "quite convinced that it might with proper management be in a much better Situation than at present and should be happy to see it soon take place."

In total, the New Hampshire physician spent nineteen months in the Continental Congress (September 1775-March 1776, May-November 1776, May-November 1778). It was both a learning and a serving experience. He attained the respect of his colleagues while angering few or none. He was a man of well-founded principles and upright morals. He paid his bills and kept accurate accounts of his expenses, duly presenting them to the state treasurer for reimbursement. For the remainder of his life he maintained some correspondence with New Hampshire's representatives to the Continental Congress and then with those who went to the United States Congress. Once out of Congress, and older and wiser, Bartlett expressed his sentiments on various subjects somewhat more freely: "I long for the time when want shall cease from the ends of the earth, and mankind be taught to cease from desolating the world and murdering their brethren to gratify the ambition of tyrants, the vilest and meanest of the whole human race." In lamenting the printing of congressional secrets in newspapers he expressed doubt about Congress's integrity:

Will not our enemies think they have nothing to fear, and our friends and allies nothing to hope, from such (I had almost said a despicable) body of men: and is there not reason to fear some others in these States may think them unworthy of the Supreme Power and be willing to put it into other hands who they may think will use it better?

Bartlett seldom reached such pique; in truth he maintained a high degree of confidence in the ability of Congress.

During the year 1777, while back in New Hampshire, Dr. Bartlett tended to personal, professional and public business. Several of his children were reaching maturity: in his letters he had revealed concern for their education as much as for their well-being. He kept up his medical practice to a considerable extent. In the summer the General Court requested that he and Dr. Nathaniel Peabody attend the New Hampshire forces in Vermont then facing the British coming down from Canada. He found himself treating the wounded of the battle of Bennington on August 17. In early September he returned to the state and resumed public duties.

Among those duties was continued service as a justice of the peace and member of the executive council and Committee of Safety. Service to these bodies continued after his return from Philadelphia — he continued on the latter into the 1780s. Taking up much of his time was judicial duty as a judge on the Rockingham County Inferior Court of Common Pleas to which he was first appointed in 1775. The Court met four times a year, usually in Exeter or Portsmouth in February, May, July and November. Many cases heard before it arose from the economic recession that affected state and nation in the wake of the Revolution. In between court sessions Bartlett spent many days on the business of the Committee of Safety. During much of 1781 and 1782 he was its president *pro tem*, an office that obliged him to send many letters of instruction, especially to militia officers during adjournments of the Court.

Bartlett held his county judgeship until he was appointed to sit on the state Superior Court in October 1782. As one of four judges for the state he was required to visit each of the five county seats twice a year to hear the cases. Only in Grafton County, distantly northwest of the homes of all the judges did the Court sit only once a year during several years in the late 1780s. He remained on the Superior Court until taking over as state president in 1790.

A letter from John Abbott of Andover, Massachusetts reveals that Bartlett owned a book by Benjamin Franklin on "electricity." Bartlett's library, some of which is now preserved at the New Hampshire Historical Society and in his

home, indicates a wide-ranging interest, concentrated heavily, as might be expected, in the sciences. As had been his practice for many years, he was able to keep up the parlor meetings of area physicians in his home. These meetings eventually led to the founding of the New Hampshire Medical Society, another positive step in the advancement of American medicine. Several other states had established medical associations by the time New Hampshire's was chartered in February 1791. The fact of its establishment, however, represented something of a personal triumph for Dr. Bartlett who had advocated it for some time.

By the time of the medical society's charter Dr. Bartlett had reached the two high points of his career in public service: in 1789 he had been commissioned as chief justice of the Superior Court after declining appointment to the United States Senate; and in 1790 he was elected president of New Hampshire, a position he held for two consecutive one-year terms until June 1792. In 1788 he was a prominent and leading member of the New Hampshire Constitution Convention. He had long been a proponent of centralized national government and so he fought hard to overcome the antifederalist opinions of Joshua Atherton and others. Clearly, the ratification of the Federal Constitution by his state was a victory for Josiah Bartlett. The following year, in July 1789, he suffered his deepest personal loss, the death of his wife. Apparently she died quite unexpectedly, of an apoplectic fit. In 1792, a new state constitution created the executive position of governor and Bartlett was reelected for two one-year terms.

His life as the state's executive was not as arduous as it might have been in less settled times. New Hampshire was recovering from the wounds of the Revolution and the ravages of the economic recession of the 1780s. Governor Bartlett oversaw an economy that was steadily improving, a militia that was fairly steady in its membership and unencumbered with emergency problems, and a political administration that was still small and apparently congenial in its membership. Some indication of his satisfaction as well as his view on the success of state and national affairs can be gleaned from his first address to the legislature on June 9, 1790:

A retrospective view of the Scenes through which we have lately passed would serve to give the most striking contrast to our present situation and future prospects. Through the partiality of my fellow Citizens I have been called in various Stations & employments to manifest my love & attachment to my Country in times of danger & distress and the last part of my life has been spent in support of a cause which it hath pleased divine providence to crown with success. That our Country is now free and that we have now the means of attaining all the blessings & advantages resulting from a free & equal Government we are under Heaven indebted to the valour & patriotism of our Citizens as yet unparalleled in the annals of History.

For being called upon to lead the state at that time he was "peculiarly grateful."

The next most important man in state government, Treasurer John Taylor Gilman, followed Bartlett to the gubernatorial seat in 1794. While these may not have been the best of times for New Hampshire they were surely better years than the state had witnessed since the mid-1760s. The tranquility can fairly be attributed in large measure to the strong, steady executive leadership exerted by Dr. Josiah Bartlett of Kingston.

Since the continuing overriding theme of Bartlett's life was his devotion to the practice of medicine, it would seem fair to conclude that his most gratifying triumph must have been the establishment of the state medical society. The charter of that body included a set of laws assigning to it responsibility for the maintenance of quality medical care for the citizens of New Hampshire. Bartlett continuously maintained an interest in the general welfare of the community. He said it best before the legislature on November 21, 1792:

Every regulation that will have a tendency to diffuse knowledge and information, and to encourage virtue, morality & patriotism among the people, especially among the Youth and rising generation, cannot fail of being abundantly useful and beneficial to the State, as it is a



Medical chest owned by Dr. Bartlett

maxim well established "That no Republic can be lasting and happy, unless accompanied with Knowledge and public virtue in the People at large."

More specifically in reference to medicine he put his thoughts vividly in a letter to the medical society, June 19, 1793:

I have long wished that the Practice of Medicine in this State (upon which the lives & health of our fellow Citizens depend) might be put under better regulations than it has

been in times past and have reason to hope that the incorporation of the Newhampshire Medical Society (if properly attended to by the Fellows) will produce effects greatly beneficial to the community by encouraging Genius & learning in the Medical Science and discouraging ignorant & bold pretenders from practicing an Art which they have no knowledge. That the members of the Society may be usefull to themselves & the public and enjoy the Exalted pleasure & satisfaction that arises from a consciousness of that they have con-

tributed to the health & happiness, not only of their respective Patients, but by communicating to others the knowledge & cure of diseases, to the general happiness of the human race, is the ardent wish of Gentlemen your very humble servt.

The medical society's charter, which was written largely by Bartlett or under his guidance, sought to insure discipline within the profession. It charged certain members with censorship and spelled out requirements of learning to be met by prospective practitioners in the state. The charter gave the society a legal sanction by which it could forbid any physician from practicing within the state of New Hampshire.

Josiah Bartlett retired from the presidency of the medical society in 1793 and from public office in June 1794. He lived another year, until May 15, 1795, at his home in Kingston. His health had begun to fail while he was governor; expecting death he put his will and accounts in order. His greatest legacy to the state and nation was his contribution to the freedom of his nation. The one felt most directly two hundred years later is his achievement of better regulation of medical practice.

Bibliographical Note

The writing of this paper has been facilitated by the fact that I am currently collecting and editing the papers of Josiah Bartlett as a Bicentennial project of the New Hampshire American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the New Hampshire Historical Society. A microfilm edition is scheduled to be made available during 1976 to be followed by a letterpress edition of selected papers upon completion of the project.

The bulk of Bartlett's personal papers rests in collections of four repositories: the New Hampshire Historical Society and the New Hampshire State Library, both in Concord; Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, New Hampshire; and in Kingston, New Hampshire, in the private collection of Mr. & Mrs. Rodney M. Wilson. Most of his official papers are in the New Hampshire State Archives, Concord, and in the records collections at the courthouses of Rockingham,

Stratford, Hillsborough, Cheshire and Grafton Counties. Both personal and official manuscripts have been found scattered in collections of numerous repositories as well as in private collections throughout the United States, with the majority being in the east and northeast. Although Peter Force left copies of many of Bartlett's letters in the Library of Congress, there are few original manuscripts of the signer among the Library's collection of Bartlett Family Papers.

To complete the picture begun with Bartlett's papers there is abundant primary source material for the period printed in Nathaniel Bouton et al., eds., *New Hampshire State Papers*, forty vols. (Concord: Ira C. Evans, 1867-1943), Worthington C. Ford et al., eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, thirty-four vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904-1937), and Edmund C. Burnett, eds., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, eight vols. (Washington: Carnegie Institute, 1921-1938).

There is no published full-length biography of Josiah Bartlett. The better biographical sketches are those by James F. Colby in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography*, twenty-two vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1944) and Dumas Malone, *The Story of the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954). An article dealing with Bartlett's participation on the committee to draft the Articles of Confederation is Elwin L. Page, "Josiah Bartlett and the Federation," *Historical New Hampshire* (October 1947). For discussions of Bartlett's interest in medicine in New Hampshire see Hamilton S. Putnam, ed., *The New Hampshire Medical Society: A History* (Milford, N. H.: The Cabinet Press, 1966) and Frank C. Mevers, "Josiah Bartlett: Physician/Jurist/Patriot," *The Journal of Legal Medicine* (July-August 1975). Excellent surveys of the Revolutionary period of New Hampshire that include extensive commentary on Bartlett are Jere Daniell, *Experiment in Republicanism: New Hampshire Politics and the American Revolution, 1741-1794* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970) and Richard F. Upton, *Revolutionary New Hampshire* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Publications, 1936).

Lyman Hall

Lyman Hall, A Connecticut Yankee in Georgia

by James Harvey Young

"This morning is assigned for the greatest debate of all," wrote John Adams from Philadelphia on July 1, 1776, to Archibald Bulloch, president of Georgia's first free government. "A declaration, that these colonies are free and independent States, has been reported by a committee appointed some weeks ago for that purpose, and this day or to-morrow is to determine its fate."

"Your colleagues, Hall and Gwinnett," Adams informed Bulloch, "are here in good health and spirits, and as firm as you yourself could wish them."

As the second Continental Congress considered Richard Henry Lee's resolution of independence, the "firm" Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett supported it, voting for it and in due course signing the famous Declaration so largely the product of Thomas Jefferson's mind and pen.

A long odyssey had brought Dr. Lyman Hall to Pennsylvania's State House in 1776, some parts of his pathway clearly marked in history, other parts obscure. Like John Adams, Hall had been born in New England of ancient Puritan stock. His great-great-grandfather had come from Coventry to Boston, sailing in 1633, and in time had moved on to Wallingford, Connecticut. Here through the generations the Halls remained. Lyman entered the world on

April 12, 1724, the fifth child in a family committed to Congregationalism and to education. These faiths may be deduced, although no accounts of Hall's boyhood survive. His mother's father, Samuel Street, a Harvard graduate, and his father's brother Samuel, a Yale graduate, served as pastors of Wallingford churches.

Young Lyman chose to attend Yale. He studied the Hebrew, Latin and Greek, the logic, rhetoric, mathematics and natural philosophy then comprising the obligatory curriculum. Yale's president Thomas Clap tutored Hall in metaphysics and divinity during his senior year. In 1747, Hall, at the age of twenty-three, received his bachelor of arts degree. Three years later he paid the fee necessary to acquire the virtually automatic master of arts. Pursuing with his uncle Samuel the study of theology begun under Dr. Clap's tutelage, Lyman dedicated himself to becoming a minister. By mid-1749 he was preaching at the Congregational church in Fairfield, Connecticut, a difficult assignment for a young man just entering the ministry, for the congregation had been split into liberal and conservative factions by theological controversy. Nonetheless, before the year was over, Lyman Hall had been ordained by the Fairfield West Consociation. Some members of the congregation protested this step, presumably on doctrinal grounds; the records do not make the reason clear.

Worse and more mysterious difficulty awaited the Rev. Mr. Hall in Fairfield. In June 1751 the Consociation charged him with immoral conduct, held a hearing, presented proof, heard Hall's confession and dismissed him from his pastorate. How did Hall sin? Again, a tantalizing gap in documentation blots out the transgression. In this case, as in others regarding Lyman Hall, the torch of British troops during the Revolution burned the evidence, when during 1779 a minister's home containing the records went up in flames. Hall's fall from rectitude must not have been immense, and his show of repentance must have been persuasive, for the Consociation voted to restore him to good standing as a minister. Although not holding a full pastorate, Hall filled vacant pulpits in and around Bridgeport for the next two years. He also taught school.

In 1752 Hall married a young woman of Fairfield, Abigail Burr, whose grandfather served as chief judge of the Connecticut Supreme Court. She lived to enjoy only thirteen months of wedded life. Soon Hall married again, to another Fairfield girl named Mary Osborne. Mary was to outlive her husband, but, despite their long life together, she presents a faceless figure in the record of history.

The ministry having proved unrewarding, Hall shifted to physic. While preaching irregularly and teaching, he seems also to have studied medicine with a

Fairfield physician. In a short time Hall returned to Wallingford, where he is said to have practiced his new profession. Again, his actions and motives are obscure.

Mystery also enshrouds one of the major determinations of Hall's life, his decision to move from New England to the South. Perhaps he wanted to shake the dust of frustration from his feet. Perhaps he felt his fortunes as physician might be better served in an environment less crowded than Connecticut. Perhaps a sense of religious mission obsessed him, for, according to tradition, Hall migrated to a town in South Carolina in which the religion of New England gave meaning to corporate life.

In the late seventeenth century a few New England Puritans transplanted to South Carolina became overcome with a sense of religious isolation in that Anglican wasteland. They sent an emissary to Dorchester, Massachusetts, pleading that a migration of godly families, accompanied by a minister, be made to enrich spiritually the barren Southern land. The seed fell upon good ground. In December 1695 a pastor and his little flock set sail for Charleston. Shortly after the new year began, a new Dorchester sprang up on the bank of the Ashley some eighteen miles upriver from Charleston, site of a Congregational covenanted society and church. Six decades later the Dorchester Puritans retained the integrity of their religious vision.

Perhaps it was to Dorchester that Lyman and Mary Hall came in 1756 or 1757, although no records substantiate the fact. Instead, the tradition of their remove to Dorchester may be an assumption based on their later indisputable connection with these resettled Puritans. Certainly coming to South Carolina, the Halls more likely settled in Charleston, where Dr. Hall established a medical practice. One glint of insight only, and that by inference, illumines the early South Carolina career of Hall the physician: he made and sold "a famous cosmetic water for the ladies."

The Halls did not remain in Charleston long. Within several years they joined a new migration by members of the Dorchester society, who had become cramped for land. After searching in

vain for an alternate site in South Carolina, the Dorchester Puritans looked to Georgia for a new abode. The time seemed ripe for such a quest. Georgia had been established just twenty years before, and only in the closing days of trustee control had certain restrictions been removed that would have posed problems for the South Carolina Puritans: restraints on land ownership and the prohibition of slavery. Just as slave-trading did not bother the consciences of many New England Puritans, so slavery did not trouble these Southern Puritans. Adopting South Carolina agricultural practices, they accepted the use of slaves. In 1752, the same year that the King took over control of Georgia from the trustees, the first families from Dorchester moved to that colony, bringing their slaves with them, thus launching a twenty year migration that transferred their society to Georgia's Midway settlement. In 1760, Hall was granted land in Georgia, on which he established a plantation, Hall's Knoll, near the center of the new settlement at Midway Meeting House.

This settlement lay south of Savannah, some ten miles inland from the Atlantic coast, between the Medway and the Newport Rivers, and more precisely between the Mount Hope and the Bull Town Swamps. "The country was densely wooded, marish, and filled with game." So wrote an historian who himself grew up in the area some years later.

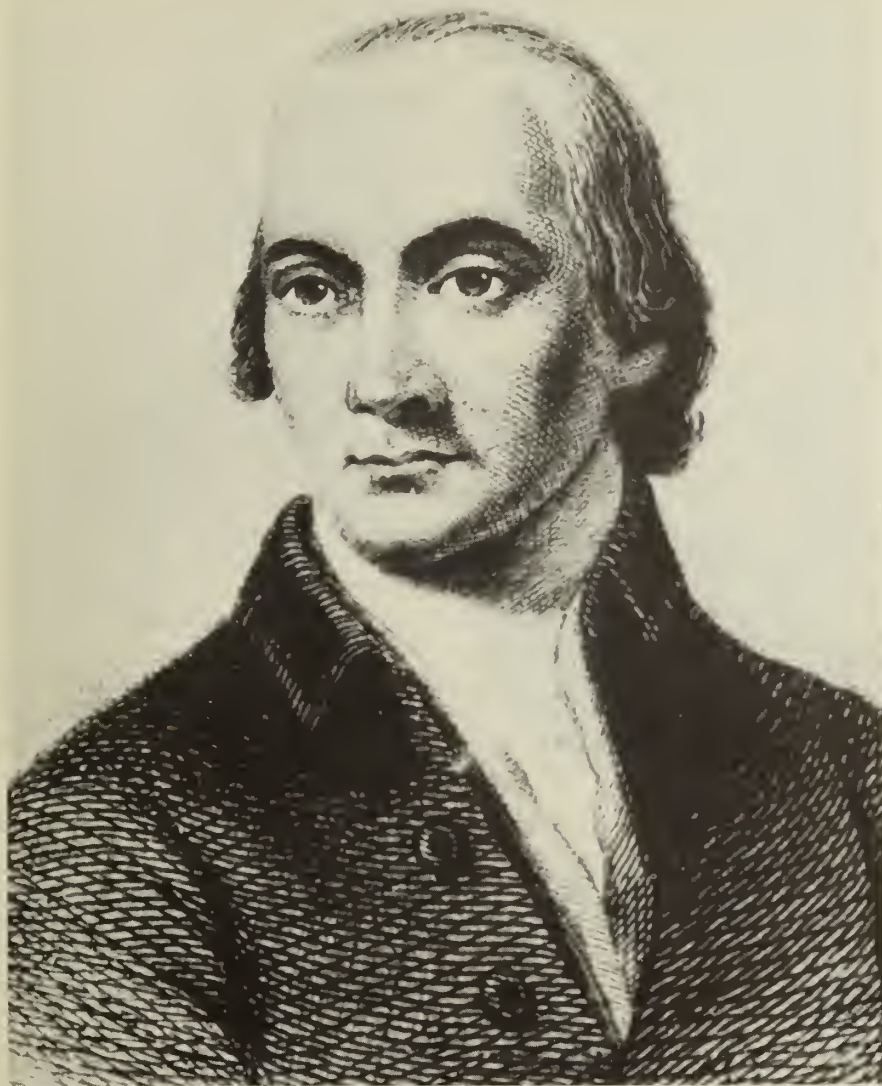
Ducks and geese in innumerable quantities frequented the low grounds, creeks, and lagoons. Wild turkeys and deer abounded. Bears and beavers dwelt in the swamps, and buffalo herds wandered in the neighborhood. There was no lack of squirrels, raccoons, opossums, rabbits, snipe, woodcock, cranes, herons, and rice-birds. Wildcats and hawks were the pest of the region, while the cry of the cougar was often heard in the depths of the vine-clad woods. The waters were alive with fishes, alligators, terrapins, and snakes.

Historian Charles C. Jones omitted mention of the mosquito. The life of this ubiquitous insect became more abundant as the settlers arrived in greater numbers, deliberately locating beside

the swamps, and in them fashioning canals and ditches, dams and backwaters, for the better cultivation of rice, their principal crop.

At Hall's Knoll, Dr. Hall's slaves grew rice, and he began to tend the sick of the community. No records survive relating to Dr. Hall's practice, but he must have been a busy man. Illness abounded on the edge of the swamps, caused, according to the theory of the times, by the exposure to the sun of the newly turned and miasmatic soil. "So frequent were the deaths among children," historian Jones wrote sadly, "that they seldom arrived at puberty." Men and women managing to reach adulthood did so with enfeebled constitutions. The autumnal months brought malaria, and the winter and spring pneumonia. According to the folk wisdom, wrote Jones, those who "survived a severe attack of bilious fever in the fall . . . would certainly die of pleurisy in the spring." In such discouraging circumstances, a physician's task proved difficult indeed.

In search of more salubrious circumstances and a port more convenient than Savannah from which to ship their produce, the Midway settlers had created a new town. Beginning in 1758 they established Sunbury on a high bluff overlooking the Medway River where it flowed into the ocean. Not long after his arrival in Georgia, Dr. Hall built a home there on two of the best situated lots fronting on the bay. The botanist William Bartram, who visited Sunbury later, called it a "Pretty Town." "The inhabitants," he wrote, "are genteel & wealthy, either Merchants or Planters from the Country who resort here in the Summer & Autumn, to partake of the Salubrious Sea breeze, Bathing & sporting on the Sea Islands." Despite these attractions of Sunbury and a promising rice plantation, Lyman Hall seemed to have had second thoughts about his move to Georgia. By mid-1762 he was back in South Carolina, living in the village of Pon Pon south of Charleston. From this year comes the only significant revelation found in the record relating to Hall as physician, a product of Hall's own hand. In the *South Carolina Gazette*, Hall placed an advertisement announcing himself as "practitioner in physic and surgery," and seeking to "acquaint his friends and others, that he shall be



No authentic portrait of Lyman Hall (1724-1790) is known to exist. This engraving by H. B. Hall was presumably made in 1869 for the autograph collector Thomas Addis Emmett, who desired to have a portrait of each signer. Engraver Hall made several such portraits, including one of Button Gwinnett, basing them on verbal descriptions in early composite lives of the signers.

ready at all hours to serve them in his profession." He had various medicines for sale, including family medicines and perfuming waters, as well as his "famous cosmetic water" that the ladies might have remembered from before.

In 1775 Lyman and Mary Hall welcomed into their family a son whom they named John. In 1767 and 1768 Dr. Hall signed as a witness to some wills. In 1770 he sold a slave. These events testify that Hall's second stay in South Carolina lasted at least eight years. He did not, however, give up Hall's Knoll or his residence in Sunbury, and by 1774 was back in Georgia and deeply involved in the politics of revolution.

The year 1774 marked a bitter peak in a decade of increasing tension between mother country and colonies in America, witnessing the Intolerable Acts and the convening of the first Continental Congress. Georgia alone among the thirteen British colonies along the Atlantic coast sent no delegates to Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia. Many reasons encouraged in Georgians a sense of loyalty to Britain and caution with respect to words and deeds of protest. The newest colony, Georgia had been treated generously by the Parliament with annual grants. British restraints on colonial trade, so

disturbing to colonies to the north, affected Georgia hardly at all. Indeed, Britain paid high bounties on Georgia's indigo and rice. Hostile Indians dwelling fairly near to every Georgia settlement remained generally peaceful because of British gifts and British troops. Sir James Wright, the royal governor, an able man with colonial interests much at heart, enjoyed wide popularity.

Despite such grounds for loyalty to the mother country, Georgians felt increasing disquiet over developing British policy. In most respectful terms, the Georgia assembly objected to new revenue measures and petitioned for their repeal. Indications surfaced of more extreme modes of protest. In 1765 Savannah artisans and small merchants met in a tavern, organized the Sons of Liberty, and warned of trouble should the Stamp Act be enforced. They hanged and burned an effigy of a stamp officer. Still, through the ensuing years, Georgia's responses came more tardily and in a milder form than those from colonies to the north.

When the call for a Continental Congress came in 1774, the patriots held two meetings in Savannah at the "liberty pole" at Tondee's Tavern. Every parish sent spokesmen to the second gathering in August, but, while British policy received stout condemnation, majority sentiment opposed sending representatives to the Continental Congress.

This do-nothing policy upset patriot leaders from the parish that had sent the largest delegation — Lyman Hall among them — to the Savannah meeting, the parish of St. John's. Back home in Midway, they continued their efforts to have Georgia represented in Philadelphia. Two meetings were held, with spokesmen from several other parishes present, and a delegate was picked. But he did not go north. Either his journey depended on later approval by other parishes, which was not received, or the decision was personal, based on an awareness that he could not truly represent the sentiment in Georgia. So Lyman Hall stayed home.

Governor Wright, busily striving to stem the growth of disloyal sentiment, spoke of the Sons of Liberty as "Sons of Licentiousness." The major villains, however, in his opinion, were the Con-

gregationalists of St. John's Parish. This group, the governor wrote, "chiefly descendants of New-England people, of the Puritan sect," despite their long residence in the South retained "a strong tincture of Republican or Oliverian principles." Among the troublemakers, Wright pointed the finger of blame directly at Lyman Hall.

Hall had played a leading role in both the Savannah and the St. John's meetings. Whereas members of the Continental Congress bemoaned Georgia's absence "with resentment," they knew of Lyman Hall's sympathetic sentiments and sent him copies of documents issuing from their deliberations. When Hall learned of the Continental Association, established by the Congress to cut off imports from and exports to Britain, he convened a new meeting in Midway that resolved to abide by the Association's terms. Hall then strove to get all Georgia to comply.

In January 1775 Georgia's first Provincial Congress met in Savannah. Again it turned out to be a rump affair. Indeed, among the parishes officially absent was St. John's. Lyman Hall and his fellow patriots from Midway had come to Savannah, but once there had tried a dubious power play. Having already acceded to the Continental Association, they refused to join the assembly until that body had done likewise, applying a sort of lobbying pressure from the outside. The assembly took tentative steps in that direction, agreeing to a circumscribed approval of the Association and naming delegates to the forthcoming second Continental Congress. But they failed finally to approve these steps, adjourning and turning over to the colony's Commons House of Assembly, which had just assembled, the task of pushing resistance forward. While noting their loyalty to King George III, the members of that body expressed concurrence with the resolves of the first Continental Congress and began steps to send to the second Congress those delegates named by the Provincial Assembly. Governor Wright checkmated this move by pro-roguing the legislature. The three men who had been almost selected to represent Georgia in Philadelphia remained at home. Sentiment in the colony, they wrote the Continental Congress, continued so split that they dared not speak for it.

Such indecisiveness, such shillyshallying, drove Midway patriots to distraction, indeed, to the brink of secession. Interest as well as patriotic principle was involved. Adherents to the Continental Association had pledged to cut off trade with those colonies that abstained. Several colonies took such formal action with respect to Georgia, and so did the second Continental Congress when it met in May. Such a



The first seal of the Colony of Georgia, used in 1732 and 1733. Water flowing from the urns represented the Altamaha and Savannah Rivers, then boundaries of the colony. The reverse side pictures a silk worm, chrysalis and cocoon on a mulberry leaf. The trustees hoped to establish silk culture in Georgia.

boycott, were it effective and long sustained, could ruin a colony's trade. The planters and merchants of the Midway settlement and Sunbury feared economic disaster. They vouchsafed their faith in principle by cutting off trade with the rest of Georgia. Then, to safeguard their economy and to ally themselves with persons of equivalent patriotic ardor, the Midway whigs, Hall in the lead, appealed to the Committee of Correspondence of Charleston.

Dr. Hall's role as gadfly of revolutionary sentiment in Georgia is amply attested to: beginning in 1774 his name appears frequently in the records. Yet he left a discouragingly thin trail, not helped by the hazards posed to documents by the inflammatory climate of revolution. This Connecticut Yankee, once minister, now physician, comfortably settled on the Georgia coast, possessed of a plantation and a house in town, respected by his patients and the general community, lights the torch of rebellion but does not tell the future why. No pamphlets from his pen develop the reasons for his stand; no reports of speeches summarize his arguments; no body of personal correspondence embodies his apologia. Official letters over his signature are very rare. Almost as little is known about Hall's developing political concepts as about his medical theories.

For these reasons the appeal from St. John's Parish to the Charleston committee possesses significance, for this letter of February 9, 1775 was signed by, and presumably written by, Lyman Hall. So half-hearted had been the actions of the Provincial Congress, Hall asserted, that St. John's Parish desired an "alliance" with South Carolina that would permit continued trade under the terms of the General Association. Being "large enough for particular notice," possessing a seaport and having by its stand on policy "detached" itself from the rest of Georgia, St. John's believed it fitting to play such an independent role.

But the patriot committee in Charleston did not agree. St. John's remained part of Georgia and must share the consequences of the trade taboo. In conveying this decision, the South Carolinians lamented St. John's "unhappy situation," praised Hall and his associates for "their arduous struggle in favour of the common cause in America," and urged them to place their case before the new session of the Continental Congress to convene in May.

St. John's Parish did just that. At a meeting on March 21 Lyman Hall was unanimously elected. Legend has it Hall rode his horse to Philadelphia. More likely Hall went north by ship, taking with him two hundred barrels of rice collected by Georgia patriots to give — in Governor Wright's ironical phrase —

to "the poor distressed, innocent brethren in Boston," where fighting had begun. On May 13 the second Continental Congress was informed that Hall "attended at the door" to represent his parish "and desired to know whether, as such, he may be admitted." Unanimously the Congress accorded him status as a delegate. Hall himself ward off embarrassment by suggesting that, since he did not represent a whole colony, "he did not insist on giving a vote as a colony, but was contented to hear and assist in the debates, and give his vote in all cases except when the sentiments of the Congress were taken by colonies." Thus the second Continental Congress consisted of delegates from twelve colonies and one parish until September 1775. Then Hall, who was by then elected regularly, was joined by other Georgians chosen by a second Provincial Congress reflecting the increasingly radical sentiment of the southernmost colony.

While the sole Georgian in Philadelphia, Hall played a retiring role. Indeed, the Journals of the Continental Congress do not record any instance of his participation in debate. Perhaps his status as physician may have led to his appointment, a month after the battle of Bunker Hill, to a scientific committee. Along with John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry and others, Hall was deputized to seek out in all the colonies "virgin lead, and leaden ore, and the best methods of collecting, smelting, and refining it." Also within the committee's charge came inquiry as to "the cheapest and easiest methods of making salt." The intensifying conflict forced upon the Congress an increasing array of practical concerns.

During the early months of 1776, American sentiment accelerated toward the crucial step of revolution. George III spoke of rebellion; British troops bombarded Norfolk; Thomas Paine penned his fiery pamphlet, *Common Sense*. Georgia, initially cautious, now shared in the bolder trend. When British men-of-war entered the Savannah River, patriots arrested Governor Wright, paroled him, then saw him flee to the protection of the ships. A brief river battle occurred as the British sought to capture boats loaded with rice. In this atmosphere a new Provincial Congress elected dele-

gates to the Continental Congress, among them once again Dr. Lyman Hall, and also Button Gwinnett. Gwinnett owned a plantation on St. Catherine's Island, very near to Sunbury, and had become one of Hall's friends, patients and political allies. When in May they presented their credentials, John Adams wrote of them as "intelligent and spirited men, who make a powerful addition to our phalanx."

Hall, Gwinnett and shortly George Walton came to the Congress with elastic instructions. Archibald Bulloch, president of the Provincial Congress, had written: "We . . . shall rely upon your Patriotism, Abilities, Firmness and Integrity, to propose, join and concur in all such measures as you shall think calculated for the common good, and to oppose such as shall appear destructive." Measures to concur in included declaring American independence. When, within several weeks, the Georgia delegation was called upon to support the Declaration, they did so with firm conviction. They demurred only from that part of Jefferson's draft that condemned King George for continuing the foreign slave trade, which clause the Georgians helped get deleted.

Through the crucial year 1776 Lyman Hall, while continuing to remain silent in Congressional debate, served on a number of crucial committees, some of them concerned with the health of the Continental Army. He joined an already functioning committee to look into the provision of medicines for the military forces. As fighting intensified, the Congress created special committees aimed at securing drugs, clothing and other provisions for the troops and at providing proper care for the wounded and disabled. Hall was appointed to these committees, sometimes collaborating with Benjamin Rush. With committee colleagues, Hall also pondered broader matters of policy. He served on a committee that conferred for a week with General Washington and his aides about military plans for the forthcoming campaign. He inquired into "the causes of the miscarriages in Canada." With Richard Henry Lee and James Wilson, Hall wrestled with the major problem of devising "ways and means of supplying the treasury with a further sum of money." And, on a narrower front, Hall looked into the complaint of a chaplain who had served the army for eight months without getting his pay.



A Georgia soldier of the Revolution, Sheftall Sheftall, in the uniform he wore during the war and persisted in wearing after the war for the remainder of his life.

Lyman Hall took part in the early discussions of what governmental structure the new United States should possess, but he was not in attendance when the Articles of Confederation received their final form. Although reelected from Georgia steadily through 1780, Hall made his last appearance in the Congress during February 1777. His absence did not betoken disinterest in Congressional activities. Replying to a newsy letter from his Connecticut friend, Roger Sherman, Hall thanked him for his reports on Congressional, foreign and military affairs. "... the Medical system," Hall observed with disgust, "looks, like the Degenerate face of *Corruption*."

Lyman Hall remained in Georgia because, in his mind, the state scene took precedence over Confederation business. "I frequently Wish to be with you," he wrote Sherman, "but Alas! this State is in so much Danger Externally & Internally, that it seems Necessary that I should Throw my Small Might for its preservation." Georgia had in 1777 adopted a constitution of which Hall was inordinately proud, contending that "it may be Rank'd among the Best on this Continent." As a delegate to the Continental Congress, Hall automatically held a seat in the Assembly created by the constitution.

Indeed, Hall was present in Savannah when the first Assembly met to elect a governor. The rivalry was intense, for Georgia patriots had split into two bitter factions, one rural and liberal and wary of military dominance over civil affairs. the other urban and conservative and respectful of the military. Hall favored the gubernatorial candidacy of Button Gwinnett, but Gwinnett did not win election. During the debate Hall was present in the chamber, although not close enough to hear, when General Lachlan McIntosh, one of Gwinnett's enemies, blasted him as "a *Scoundrell & Lying Rascal*." This led to the famous duel. Although not present, Hall shortly described the event in a letter to Sherman.

Standing ten or twelve feet apart, Gwinnett and McIntosh fired their pistols simultaneously, each wounding the other in the thigh. Gwinnett fell, his thigh bone broken. He "was brought in," Hall wrote, "the weather Extremely



A recent imaginary recreation of Lyman Hall, this bust sculpted by Bryant Baker stands in the Georgia State Capitol.

hot. A Mortification came on — he languished . . . [for three days], & expired." Hall grieved at the death of his neighbor and compatriot. "O Liberty!" he concluded his letter, "Why do you suffer so many faithful sons, your warmest Votaries, to fall at your Shrine! Alas! my Friend, my Friend!"

Lyman Hall became executor of Button Gwinnett's estate, a task which through the years consumed much time and remained unfinished at Hall's own death. More immediately, like others of the liberal patriot wing, Hall considered the shot fired by Lachlan McIntosh but one more example of traitorous conduct by members of the McIntosh family. Hall joined a host of Liberty County residents in beseeching the Continental Congress to move General McIntosh out of the South, fearing otherwise "a military Government" run by "the Dic-

tates of a prejudiced and Suspected officer." Getting General McIntosh away from Georgia, Hall and his allies asserted, would prove a "deadly Stroke to Toryism."

The true Tories and British troops, however, were the real enemies of freedom in Georgia. Although the revolutionists had gained control of the state with the flight of Governor Wright, the tide of warfare changed. Sporadic attacks upon the coast from British ships, occasional land forays from Florida, were followed late in 1778 by the major British strategy of striving to win the war by first conquering the South. In December 1778 Savannah fell into British hands, and shortly all of Georgia, except frontier areas, again came under royal control, there to remain, with Wright returning to govern, until the British evacuated Savannah in June 1782.

St. John's Parish, made the nucleus of Liberty County under the first state organization, lay vulnerable to both sea and land attack. Here revolutionary sentiment had burned with intense brightness, and here British revenge burned with equal intensity. As British regulars and American Tories ravaged the coastal region, the plantation house at Hall's Knoll and Hall's home in Sunbury both went up in flames. Named in a British act of attainder, Hall stood accused of high treason; his property was confiscated.

Anticipating such disasters, Hall moved his family to the vicinity of Charleston, perhaps practicing medicine in South Carolina for a third time. In little more than a year, however, the British brought Charleston under siege, and the Halls were again forced to flee. A plausible tradition holds that they spent the remainder of their exile with relatives in Connecticut.

From this exile, the Halls returned to Georgia when the British had gone. Savannah lacked doctors, and Hall there resumed practice of his profession. At the same time he set about recovering his land in Liberty County. As a delegate from Liberty County he was chosen to the House of Assembly of Georgia. The legislature met in January 1783 and as its first act called Hall away from medicine once more to political service, by electing him governor. In notifying Hall of this honor, the speaker praised him for the "Early and decided Part" he had taken "in the cause of america" and for "exertions in the Course of the Arduous and important Struggle Which Preceded the Auspicious dawn of Independence." Hall replied that his prompt option for freedom "Originated from a full Conviction of the Justice and Rectitude of the cause."

The state of Georgia faced massive problems, and as a "reconstruction" governor Hall wrestled with them manfully, providing one of the few examples of firm executive leadership during the state's early history. The British had fled, but, though peace negotiations were under way, the war had not ended. The coast lay vulnerable to renewed attack. From Florida Tories made destructive forays, and within Georgia bands of banditti plundered honest citizens. The Creeks and the Cherokee, less troublesome during the war than

had been expected, now threatened again, spurred on by the British and Spanish and angered by increasing intrusion upon their domains by land-hungry frontiersmen. Loyalties seemed as confused as land titles. In land lay the main basis for wealth; but amidst war's devastation crops had been neglected. Due to the "great scarcity of provisions," common citizens came close to starving, and the needs of Continental troops could barely be met.



When Georgia declared its independence in 1776 and the next year completed a state constitution, it adopted a new Great Seal, used until 1798.

Often during Lyman Hall's year as governor the condition of the state treasury was as the Executive Council described it in March, "at present altogether empty."

Faced with such massive problems, Governor Hall sought actively to take what steps his weak executive authority permitted and urged policies upon the legislature. He tried to maintain adequate defense and to provision the troops. One of his final acts as governor

was to inform Georgians of the treaty signed at Paris officially ending the war. Hall pushed rigorously the policy of exiling troublesome Tories and confiscating and selling their estates, but he showed signs of leniency toward those who had given lip service to the King's government because of the exigencies of war. Hall sought new cessions of land from the Indians to reward soldiers and to lure more settlers to the state. He himself led commissioners to a successful parley with the Cherokees and a futile assembly with the Creeks. Hall footed much of the bill for presents given to the Indians on these occasions, so bare were the state coffers. While anxious to acquire new land from the Indians, the governor also strove to keep the Indians peaceful by barring white trespassers from their hunting grounds.

Hall made provisions to feed the hungry, banning the export of commodities so as not to deplete further the meager food supply. He sought to bring some order to the state's finances by gaining a clearer assessment of its debts, accelerating the sale of confiscated property, reopening a land office and urging a policy of taxation upon the Assembly. Hall made small progress at bringing solvency to the state. Indeed, at the end of his term the Assembly made good his salary of £500 and covered part of his outlay for gifts to the Indians by granting him title to two confiscated estates which he had earlier bought.

Hall thought also in terms of mental and spiritual reconstruction. In July, the governor sent the House of Assembly a wide-ranging speech including a broad and perceptive list of policies for Georgians to consider at war's end.

"Blessings [such as peace], unless improved," Hall asserted, "change their nature; and neglected, will involve us in the severest calamities." A fundamental means of improving the blessing of peace, the governor argued, lay in enacting "wholesome laws, restraining vice." In addition, "every encouragement ought to be given to introduce religion, and learned Clergy." "For this purpose," Hall urged the Assembly, "it will be your wisdom to lay an early foundation for endowing Seminaries of learning; nor can you, I conceive, lay in a better, than by a grant of a sufficient tract of land, that may . . . raise a revenue, sufficient to support such valuable institutions."

The legislature heeded the words of the Yale graduate and former clergyman who was their governor, and set aside land that subsidized academies in three of the state's towns. Moreover, the governor's suggestion, boldly built upon by another graduate of Yale, Hall's friend Abraham Baldwin, led to the chartering of the University of Georgia.

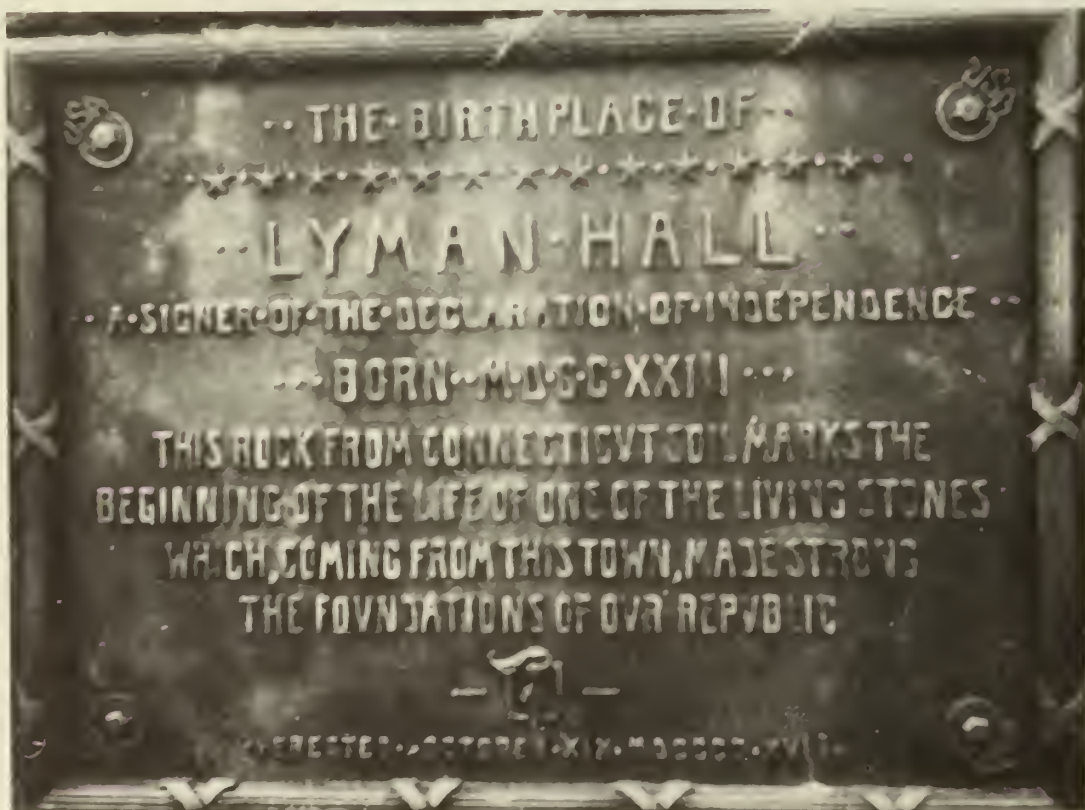
Hall followed his year's term as governor with brief service in the next session of the Assembly. That ended Lyman Hall's career, except for a term as judge of the Inferior Court of Chatham County. In time he sold Hall's Knoll, but he retained an interest in plantation economy. In 1789 he joined with like-minded men in forming a society for the promotion of agriculture. The next year he retired to another plantation that he purchased in Burke County on a bluff overlooking the Savannah River. He lived here for only a few months, dying on October 19, 1790, at the age of sixty-six. Neither Hall's widow nor his unmarried son long survived him. The records of Hall's estate burned in a court house fire.

The historian Ulrich B. Phillips once wrote that "had not a group of New England families established themselves about the middle of the coast line Georgia might not have joined in the demand for American independence." Among those Midway patriots, Lyman Hall was a fearless champion of freedom, singled out individually by the King's governor. Hall's Connecticut roots certainly meant much to him; he remembered his Congregational convictions and his empathy with New England's suffering. While Hall attended the Continental Congress, another Southern member possessing variant convictions wrote, "Georgia always votes with Connecticut." If ideology motivated Hall, economic interest may have spurred him to more decisive action. Like other plantation owners, Hall needed to sell his produce, and the Continental Association blocked markets for Georgia wares. As events pushed him into greater prominence, Hall may have acquired a modicum of political ambition, a taste for office. He willingly rep-

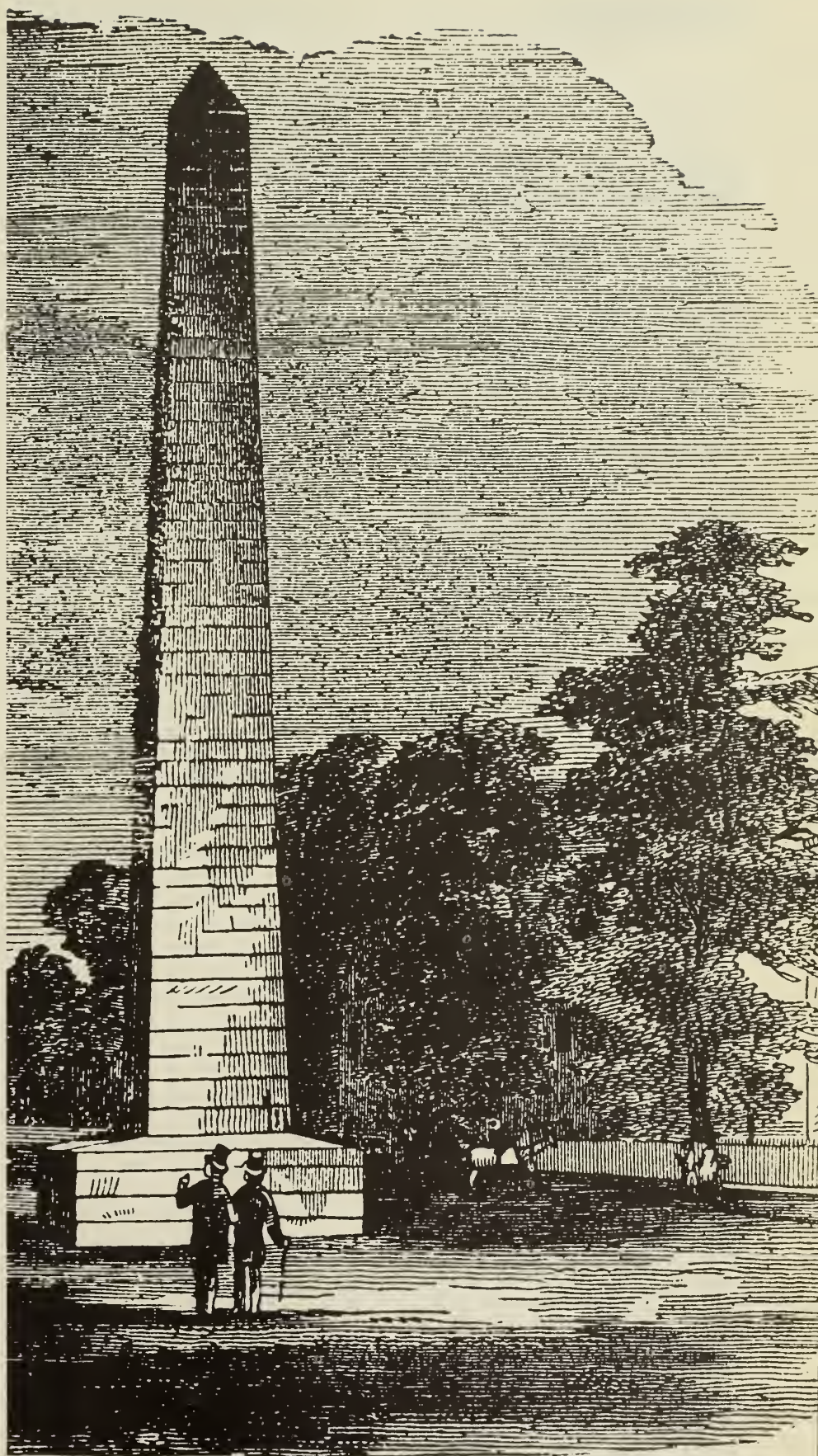
resented his parish, then all of Georgia, in the Continental Congress, and later accepted with alacrity the governorship.

Powerful ambition, however, seemed not part of Lyman Hall's makeup. In the Congress he performed as a steady committeeman, not a major leader. He seldom participated in debate and, indeed, did not enjoy a reputation as an orator. As governor, he attended diligently to business and had a broad grasp of Georgia's problems as a newly independent state.

Hall as a person does not emerge vividly from contemporary accounts, and no authentic portrait of him seems to exist. He was said to be tall for his time, six feet one inch, courteous and dignified, mild and generally calm of temper. No records testify to the skill of his medical science or to the nature of his bedside manner. When the call of patriotism demanded, Lyman Hall abandoned physic, then resumed his profession in his later years when his state and nation had achieved their independence.



Primary sources for the events in which Lyman Hall played a part have been assembled in such useful collections as Worthington C. Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress* (Washington, 1904-1937); Edmund C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* (Washington, 1921-1936); Allen D. Candler, compiler, *The Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta, 1908); and George White, ed., *Historical Collections of Georgia* (New York, 1854). The *Gazettes* of Savannah and Charleston add a few items of interest to the record. Scarcely anything significantly new on Hall has been turned up by such Bicentennial projects as the Center for the Documentary Study of the Revolution, National Archives, whose archivist is George C. Chalou or the American Revolution Bicentennial Office of the Library of Congress, whose director is Paul H. Smith. The best biographical sketch of Hall is in Charles C. Jones, Jr., *Biographical Sketches of the Delegates from Georgia to the Continental Congress* (Boston, 1891), although his chronology of Hall's life in the South required revision. James W. Hall, *Lyman Hall, Georgia Patriot* (Savannah, 1959), a labor of love, although not by a relative, contains some new material. Shorter summaries include Franklin B. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College* (New York, 1896), II, 116-19; Herbert Thoms, "Lyman Hall, Physician, Patriot, 'Signer,'" *Medical Journal and Record*, CXXV (1927), 808-10; and Joseph Krafka, Jr., "Lyman Hall — Yale 1747," *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine*, X (July 1938), 531-37. Good background works are Kenneth Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia, 1763-1789* (Athens, 1958) and Jack C. Crandall, "Georgia and the Continental Congress" (unpublished master's thesis, Emory University, 1949). I wish to express special appreciation for help to Rick Beard of the National Portrait Gallery, David R. Chesnutt and George C. Rogers, Jr., of the University of South Carolina (who furnished information from South Carolina archives), Kenneth Coleman of the University of Georgia, Sandra B. Groover of the Georgia Department of Archives & History, Howard R. Lamar of Yale and James Z. Rabun of Emory University.



Monument in Augusta to the three Georgia signers of the Declaration of Independence. Lyman Hall was reburied here.

Letters

Lessons of remote site elective apply here, too

I thoroughly enjoyed the three articles in the January/February issue about the "different sort of elective" with the Indian Health Service at Zuni, New Mexico. As possibly the HMS graduate with the greatest longevity in IHS, my reactions and comments may interest you.

My initial IHS experience, begun in 1960 as an elective while a fourth year student and continued after internship, was at a small hospital similar to the Zuni Hospital, at Crownpoint, New Mexico, in the Navajo area. My experience in those early years was very much as described so well by Dr. Masters. HMS in those years, to my dismay, was not interested in an elective at Crownpoint, but I was able to interest a fairly steady stream of students from other medical schools in taking an elective at Crownpoint over the four year period that I remained there, and several of them returned after their internships. A common reaction of these students was one of surprise at the quality of overall health care possible in such an outpost; care which appeared to compare quite favorably with that available in the medical centers in which they were training. They had come expecting a far out rugged medical adventure. Finding an excellent general medical experience, they were surprised.

In a previous issue of the *Bulletin* several years ago focusing on Indian health, as well as in the January/February issue, much of the interest is in the description of Indian cultures, the cross-cultural medical experience, and the unusual medical problems in Indian populations. It is easy to ignore the possibility that the organization and distribution of health care for American Indians by the various outposts of IHS may offer an excellent model useful for the non-Indian population also, and worthy of study and emulation though difficult to perceive as such, at such a distance, geographically and psychically, from Boston.

So I am happy to see these articles in the *Bulletin*. My compliments to the authors for the sensitivity of their treatment of Indian affairs, and to the *Bulletin* for twice focusing on Indian health. Incidentally, on page 19 the correct name is Dr. Robert Vander-Wagen, not Vondervagen.

Jack T. Ellis '61
Indian Health Service
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Many thanks for the opportunity to read the three articles on medicine at Zuni. They stirred vivid memories of many years ago when, as an anthropological student, I lived most of a winter near Zuni in a hogan with a Navajo family. This was toward the end of the great depression and resources were even more sparse than they are now. I practiced medicine because I was there and happened to be a physician.

That experience and others since in New Mexico, Arizona, and Alaska make me wish to support in strongest terms the viewpoints expressed by the authors of the three articles. In a setting such as they described, one learns to comprehend medicine as a universal human service in a way and to a degree that is not readily achieved in most other situations. This is partly due to the richness of opportunity to see a variety of medical conditions, and partly to the responsibilities that are thrust upon one, and to the mind-stretching this entails. But it is even more due to the opportunity to see and know the individual patient as an integral part of his family, the family as an organ of its community, and the community as animated and programmed by a culture that is different from one's own — and different from several others that coexist in the same geographic area. The realization of cultural differences and their meanings, and the recognition of deeper common denominators that pervade all cultures have an enormous capacity for illuminating the human condition, and for making clear in very practical terms some of the primary needs for primary care and for the prevention of illness.

There are, of course, other opportunities comparable to those at Zuni for preceptor/clerkship programs, and while other medical schools have or have had activities of this kind, room ex-

ists for many more. I would like to suggest, therefore, that the authors seek publication in a journal such as the *JAMA* or the *New England Journal of Medicine* so that what they have to say could reach the widest possible medical audience. They might, perhaps, consider preparing such an article in consultation with the Association of American Indian Physicians.

Alexander H. Leighton, M.D.
Boston, Massachusetts

When Masters, Neutra, Buxbaum and Nelson describe a new fourth year elective clerkship in "community medicine," they make it sound so different, so well supervised, so rich in clinical and community medicine problems that the experience is bound to be educational. But it is a wonder that medical practice at such a far away place as a Zuni reservation would get the approval of the curriculum committee, when education is so firmly entrenched in the science laboratory and classroom and in the modern hospital. So where such clerkships are organized do they measure up to the traditional objectives of the elective system and do they fulfill the promises claimed for education at "remote sites?"

The idea of the elective system has been specialized education. Course requirements and elective offerings encourage students to acquire in-depth knowledge and techniques in the specialties. At the same time students also use electives for educational purposes that are never formally acknowledged. As every ex-student knows, electives are taken to help solve the problem every professional faces: what work shall I do? what kind of a doctor shall I become?

As an elective, the objective of this clerkship is not only special but general education. Masters observes that the experience provides knowledge as perspective, a view of the interaction of the scientific, folk and popular medical care systems. Neutra and Buxbaum note that the experience can also provide a "community perspective on medical practice." They add that quantitative information about disease incidence in the patient population is also available. While continuing to learn the clinical tasks, Nelson, the student,

analyzed the complex issues of a special problem, alcoholism. Certainly Nelson made the most of it. He gained a new perspective on practice, acquired detailed knowledge on a special problem, honed his clinical skills, and, we can only guess, resolved some of his career uncertainties. As a result, the clerkship measured up. Others may view such electives quite differently. Because clinical work in the field is not like that organized in hospitals, it may not be viewed as education at all, but only as a culturally interesting rest and relaxation rotation away from the discipline of the academic medical complex.

While this clerkship measures up as an elective it may not fulfill all promises being made for remote-site education. Nowadays decentralized educational sites are being organized everywhere. Legislatures expect that students will not only like community practices, but will want to locate in the states' small towns, while schools expect economies, when the pay of the clinical faculty still comes from practice. As misguided recruitment strategies, legislatures have mandated clerkships in community hospitals and schools have organized them. When this happens the education differs little. It is still hospital medicine. But other sites are being tried, as clerkships are organized in medical practices not for recruitment but to change content. Complementing hospital medicine, these ambulatory experiences promise, at least, to be different. Medicine's low technologies, clinical method and several caring tasks can be learned in ambulatory practice as rigorously as the high technology diagnosis and treatment are now mastered in the hospital. If the education is not as "disciplined" as the hospital clerkship it may only be that sufficient resources and effort have not gone into it.

For such remote-site education students should not have to go to underdeveloped territories so far away as a Zuni reservation. Unused remote sites are available right in the academic medical center or around the block in the OPDs, health centers and group practices. In the future, "electives" in such practices might be a general education for all students.

John D. Stoeckle '47
Boston, Massachusetts

Taking the mystery out of sex

The numerous courses in sexuality that are given throughout the country are designed for "professionals." Similar courses at the college level, both undergraduate and graduate, make the role of the physician very troublesome in this area. Doctors have long been expected to know everything about all aspects of medicine, including sexuality. Yet paradoxically, most physicians who have spent many years training to become professionals have heretofore had no exposure to sexuality in their formal curricula. Their own experiences have tended to be limited because their energy was ostensibly being expended and dissipated in the attempt to become better physicians. The terms "sex" and "sexuality" were so taboo that it was difficult to evaluate one's own sexuality, let alone the sexual difficulty with which a couple presented. The topic was so emotionally charged that frequently the couple could not verbalize their concerns and this, coupled with physicians' inability to focus and hear the problem, left all involved more anxious than before. Thus, a course in human sexuality in the medical school curriculum is long overdue.

The difficulties of setting up a course in human sexuality are apparent in the two articles by Drs. Babineau and Nadelson (HMAB, January/February, 1976). The emotionality and charged atmosphere still pervades and influences the educator, the teaching techniques utilized and the responsiveness of the audience.

Given a choice as to whether a course in sexuality should be compulsory or elective, I would urge that it be made a mandatory part of every medical student's education. To counterbalance all the misinformation that is foisted on the public through the various media, it is imperative that the physician be sufficiently knowledgeable to be able to counsel and educate patients. My concern about making it elective is that those students who have a good basic understanding of sexuality will tend to seek more information and knowledge, whereas those who have problems handling their own sexuality and may even have a dysfunction are almost invariably the ones who elect not to take

such a course. This latter group are perhaps the physicians to whom we can offer the greatest benefit.

The main argument leveled against the inclusion of sex education courses is that all future doctors are not going to be sex counselors. That is true. It would be unrealistic and impractical to expect this. However, better understanding of one's own sexual functioning and broadened knowledge in the field will enable the physician to feel comfortable and be receptive and alert to hear problems that may or may not be verbalized. A little preventive medicine, particularly aimed at dispelling old wives' tales and myths, goes a long way to benefit many couples and possibly avert major frustration and dysfunction in the future.

The need for this type of course is so pressing that the continuing education division of the Harvard Medical School has agreed to sponsor a course in Human Sexuality at the Beth Israel Hospital in May. By this means, physicians now in practice who have not had such formal exposure by virtue of their deficient medical school curricula will be able to correct this gap in their education. We do not expect to make a sex counselor out of everyone, of course, but rather merely to educate the professional. Sex is an integral part of the total human experience; hopefully sex education will aid the physician to be better able to serve as a provider of health care for the whole patient.

Johanna F. Perlmutter, M.D.
Boston, Massachusetts

In the summer of 1956, as a new intern on the gynecology service at the Massachusetts General Hospital, I began to awaken to the importance of human sexual functioning in medical practice. Like Dr. Babineau ['63], I'd completed college and medical school with my personal and institutional "blindness" on, and had no competence or perspective, let alone experience, in sexual counseling. Yet the positive experiences of helping a young couple with vaginismus requiring vaginal stretching under anesthesia, counseling a married woman guilty over a transient affair, and thinking about another bride-to-be who clearly was no virgin, led me to continue trying to increase my knowledge and to develop skills in interviewing and coun-

selling patients, both normal and sexually troubled. At times during this continuing process I have despairingly (and correctly) stated, "Nothing I was taught at Harvard Medical School, or in surgical or ob-gyn residency prepared me for anything that I'm doing with human sexuality." I was in ob-gyn residency at the "Lying-In" when Dr. Babineau was a student, and can testify to the lack of teaching, and the negative attitudes then current amongst faculty and staff. I remember one informed group discussion with Somers Sturgis with my fellow residents in 1963 that considered some aspects of sexual function, and it remains remarkable for its uniqueness — there was never another in my entire residency.

Since those years, drastic changes in laws and attitudes in relation to human sexuality, birth control, abortion, venereal disease, and male and female identity (sexual and otherwise) have both opened vast subject areas for discussion and clouded issues by removing certainty about aspects of normal behavior.

In the late '60s, I remember helping Dan Federman ['53] develop a brief evening elective course about sexuality for Harvard Medical School, with a mixed reception. Fortunately, as Dr. Nadelson describes, the program received more credibility as it moved into the regular curriculum, and we learned more about what was needed to teach and how to teach it. Dr. Babineau describes his involvement in the development of the sexuality course at the University of Rochester with insight into his own feelings, which for all of us is an important remembrance. After all, it was our own negative feelings that kept us from exploring and teaching about human sexuality in the past, and our positive feelings set the tone for the future.

The "New Course" as described by Dr. Nadelson is now — oversubscribed — happily a part of the past, and the next session in June will likely incorporate and benefit from our recent experiences. I believe that the participating students have learned that normal sexual function is the right of every human doctor, or patient, and that exploration of the sexuality of their patients is as legitimate for every physician as is the documentation of any other body function or dysfunction.

The "Zeitgeist" is indeed ripe, and human sexuality is no longer "beyond the pale" at Harvard and other medical schools. Although students and faculty alike will often despair at each other's shortcomings in the years ahead, we should all take courage in knowing that finally we have seen a guiding star by which to set our course toward a more healthily balanced life as students, teachers, practitioners, and human beings in the future. All of us must continue to urge medical schools everywhere to allocate appropriate time in the curriculum for the teaching of human sexuality. We need to remember that dealing with sexuality — our own and our patients' — is a life-long challenge requiring continuing study and sensitivity.

John W. Grover '56

